BOOKS

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"Stand out of my way!" commanded Eugenie, imperiously as before. "I wish to go on!" Instead of obeying, he seized her horse's bridle with an iron grasp.—Page 190.

Good Luck.

GOOD LUCK!

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF

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A. L. BURT COMPANY, Publishers

52-58 Duane Street, New York

GOOD LUCK!

[GLÜCK AUF!*]

CHAPTER I.

Although the afternoon was far advanced, the principal church of the Residence was full to overflowing. The great numbers present, the rich floral adornments of the altar, as well as the long row of waiting equipages outside, proved that the marriage about to be solemnized here excited great interest in an unusually large circle.

The bearing of the assembly, as is usual on such occasions where the sacredness of the place forbids any audible expression of curiosity or sympathy, betrayed an expectant unrest. There was a whispering, a putting of heads together, and an eager attention to all that passed near the sacristy; until at last all ended in a general half-suppressed "Ah!" of satisfaction as the doors were thrown open and with the first notes of the organ the bridal party entered.

* "Good luck!" "God speed you!"—a favorite salutation among miners.

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It was a large and brilliant company that grouped around the altar and the bridal pair. Rich uniforms, heavy velvet and satin robes, rare costly laces, flowers and diamonds, all glittered, undulated, and blent together in a blaze of magnificence dazzling to behold. The aristocracy of birth and wealth, present here in its most distinguished representatives, lent an unwonted splendor to these marriage rites.

At the right of the bride, as first among the guests, stood a tall, stately officer, whose uniform and numerous orders indicated a long military career. His bearing was simple and dignified, as became the solemnity of the occasion; and yet it seemed as if the gravity of his features concealed something not in harmony with so joyous an event. It was a peculiarly melancholy glance he threw upon the bridal pair, and as his gaze wandered over the crowded church a thrill of repressed pain or anger seemed to pass over the proud features, and the firmly closed lips quivered.

Opposite him, by the bridegroom's side, stood another gentleman in the dress of a civilian. He was somewhat advanced in years and appeared to be one of the nearest relatives; but neither the profusion of brilliants he displayed in watch-chain, rings, and breast-pin nor the immense self-consciousness of his manner could give him the faintest gleam of that distinction the man opposite possessed in so remarkable a degree. His appearance was decidedly commonplace, not to say vulgar; and this was only

heightened by his present air of unconcealed triumph. It was with infinite complacency that he surveyed the bride and groom and the brilliant assemblage—the intense satisfaction with which one hails the attainment of a long-sought goal. For him there was no shadow to dim the joy and splendor of these bridal festivities.

These two men appeared to be the only deeply interested spectators of a marriage in which the bride and groom were most indifferent of all. The most distant of the guests could have shown no greater unconcern than did these two who in a few moments would belong for life to each other.

This young bride of nineteen years was undeniably a beautiful girl, but there floated about her an icy atmosphere, little suited to the place and time. The light of the altar candles played among the heavy folds of the white satin dress and flashed back from the diamonds of the costly bridal jewels, but it fell upon a face which, with the beauty of marble, seemed to have received all its coldness and rigidity, at least for this hour, which should have animated even the most lifeless repose.

The ash-blond of the heavy braids, around which lay the myrtle wreath, contrasted strangely with the dark brows and the almost black eyes which were raised but once or twice during the ceremony. The pale, regular features looking out from the bridal veil wore that aristocratic expression which is inborn and can never be inbred. This was the ruling element in the bride's appearance. It was

betrayed in the delicate noble outlines of her face; it was impressed upon her manner; it was so inwoven into her whole being as to throw every other characteristic into the shade.

This young lady seemed created to move only around the heights of life, without ever coming in contact with beings of a lower sphere, and yet there was an expression in those dark eyes which betrayed more energy and character than we are wont to find in a lady of fashion.

Possibly this hour demanded all the bride's energy and self-control, for as the ceremony progressed the gentleman in uniform at her right and the three young officers behind him fixed the most searching glances upon her face. But through all that face remained cold and impassive as at first.

The bridegroom, a young man of some twenty-eight years, was one of those individuals who seem created for the glittering frame of the *salon*, and who are of small account anywhere but in the fashionable world, where they celebrate their triumphs and pass their lives.

Exquisitely elegant in dress and manner, he yet appeared *blasé* in the highest degree. His refined and pleasing features wore an expression of such entire apathy, such utter indifference to every earthly thing, as to rob them of all that could attract or charm. All was so lifeless, so colorless! Not a breath of red in the cheeks, not a gleam of animation in the whole face, which looked as if neither joy nor sorrow could move it from its insensibility.

As in society a gentleman conducts a lady to her place, so he had led his bride to the altar. Now he stood at her side and held her hand in just the same listless, apathetic way. Neither the importance of the step he was about to take nor the beauty of the woman he was to marry appeared to make the slightest impression upon him.

The clergyman went on with the marriage service. His voice rang loud and clear through the church as he asked Herr Arthur Berkow and the Baroness Eugenie Maria Ann von Windeg if they here, in the presence of God and these witnesses, took each other for husband and wife.

Again there was a convulsive movement of the officer's features, and he threw a glance almost of hatred at the man opposite him. The next moment the double "Yes" had been spoken, the double vow through which one of the oldest, proudest names of the nobility was merged in the plebeian name of Berkow.

Scarce had the last word of the benediction been pronounced, when the bejeweled gentleman rushed forward with the evident idea of giving an ostentatious salutation to the newly wedded pair. But the officer was before him. Calmly, but with the manner of one who claims an inalienable right, he stepped between the two and clasped the bride in his arms. But the lips which touched her forehead were cold, and the face which for some moments bent down to hers bore an expression quite different from its usual haughty reserve.

"*Courage, my father! it must be.*"

The words, audible to him alone, recalled the baron to his self-possession. Once again he folded his daughter to his heart, and there was in his whole manner something like an entreaty for pardon. Then he released her from his arms and delivered her to the unavoidable embrace of the other gentleman, who with visible impatience had waited to congratulate his "dear daughter-in-law."

Eugenie made no resistance, for the eyes of the whole assembly were upon her. She stood immovable; no feature of the beautiful face changed; but the eyes were lifted, and there was in their glance such unapproachable pride, such icy repulsion against what she could not possibly avert, that the father-in-law, quite disconcerted, at once subdued his first violent tenderness, assuming in its stead a respectful courtesy. The embrace which followed was a mere form, in which Berkow's arm just swept the airy folds of the bridal veil. The by no means small self-conceit of the new relative had cowered before that haughty glance.

Young Berkow did not make matters so difficult to his father-in-law. Something like a pressure of the hand, in which his white glove scarce came in contact with that of the baron, was exchanged between them. It appeared to quite satisfy both. The bridegroom now offered the bride his arm, and they passed down the aisle. The bride's satin train swept the marble steps of the vestibule, and behind came the gorgeous array of guests. Soon

after the equipages, one after another, rolled swiftly away.

The church was quickly vacated. Some pressed to the doors and windows to gaze after the bridal party: others hurried out to exchange remarks over the appearance of the bride and groom and wedding-guests. In less than ten minutes all within was silent and desolate.

But the twilight gleamed through the lofty chancel window, flooding with its roseate beams altar and altar paintings, so that the ancient figures on that golden ground seemed to be alive. Moved by the breeze, the tapers swayed to and fro, while from the chancel floor exhaled the perfume of the flowers that had been strewn there with lavish hand. The ladies' trains had swept over them: the gentlemen's feet had crushed them. Of what account were these poor flowers amid the lavish diamond splendor of those nuptial rites which had sealed the union of the daughter of a proud hereditary race with the son of a millionaire?

The equipages had already drawn up before the baronial mansion and the brilliantly lighted rooms began to be alive with guests. In the reception-room, amid the dazzling glow of wax-tapers, stood the young bride leaning on her husband's arm, and just as proud and cold as an hour ago she had stood at the altar and received the congratulations of the wedding-guests.

Was it happiness her bridal vow had sealed? The melancholy shadow that would not lift from her father's haughty forehead gave answer.

CHAPTER II.

"Now, thank Heaven, things are at last in order! and it is high time, for in a quarter of an hour they may be here. I have given the men on the hill exact instructions. As soon as the carriage comes in sight they are to fire the first salute."

"But, Herr Director, you are too hasty—too much excited."

"Spare your energies for the all-important moment of reception!"

"In your present proud position of master of ceremonies and marshal-in-chief——"began another.

"No more of your witticisms, gentlemen," interrupted the director angrily. "I wish they had honored one of you with this accursed post. I have had enough of it."

All the officers of the great Berkow mines, in full society dress, had gathered at the foot of the terrace before the mansion house. This house, built in the most elegant modern-villa style, with its costly façade, its lofty plate-glass windows, and its magnificent entrance, more resembled a palace than a country-house. Broad, tasteful pleasure grounds surrounded it, giving an impression of boundless wealth and lavish expenditure, which was greatly enhanced to-day, when all was in gala dress.

The hot-houses had apparently yielded their choicest treasures for the adornment of staircases, balconies, and terraces. Rare and costly plants, which seldom come in contact with the outside air, here unfolded their tropical splendors and filled the air with their fragrance.

Upon the velvety lawn, surrounded by carefully tended native flowers, now in the first glories of the awakening spring, fountains sent up their glittering spray, and at the entrance to the grounds stood a grand triumphal arch, profusely decorated with flags and garlands.

"I have had enough of this!" repeated the director, joining the circle of officers. "Herr Berkow demands the most brilliant reception possible, and believes that for this nothing is needed but unlimited access to his cash-box: as to the good-will of the miners, he never brings that into account. If we only had the miners of twenty years ago! If there was then a holiday, a festival, or even a dance, we need have no anxiety about the cheers: now there is passive indifference on the one side and open hostility on the other. They were almost ready to refuse our young gentleman any reception at all! When you return to the Residence to-morrow, Herr Schäffer, you must be careful to drop no hint of matters; our proprietor either does not or *will* not know."

"I will be careful," returned Herr Schäffer. "Would you yourself like to encounter the fine phrases of our chief when he hears anything dis-

pleasing to him? In such a case, I get as far from him as possible."

The officers laughed. The absent chief did not seem to be the object of any great respect in their circle.

"But he has really brought about this aristocratic marriage," said the engineer. "He has given himself no end of trouble to secure it; and I really hope it will solace him for the loss of that patent of nobility they still obstinately refuse him in spite of all his schemes and efforts to obtain it. He at least has the triumph of seeing that the old nobility no longer take offense at his plebeian name, since the Windegs ally themselves with it."

"They could not help it," replied Herr Schäffer. "The embarrassed circumstances of the Windegs are well known at the Residence. I doubt the baron's willingness to sacrifice his daughter in such a speculation. He belongs not only to the oldest, but to the haughtiest aristocracy. Yet even he and his had to bow at last to stern necessity."

"Well, one thing is certain," replied the director: "this aristocratic alliance costs us a prodigious sum of money. In any event, the baron has made his own conditions, and I cannot see the advantage of all this sacrifice. It still remains a daughter-in-law bought for her rank and name, and Arthur will continue to be no less a plebeian, even though he has a wife of ancient lineage."

"Do you believe it?" said Herr Schäffer. "I think quite the contrary. To the husband of the

Baroness Windeg-Rabenau, the son-in-law of the baron, they will not refuse that title for which his father has striven in vain; but, let this be as it may, they cannot prevent his now associating with that circle which has hitherto excluded him. Teach me anything about our chief! He knows just what this marriage will bring him and is therefore regardless of its cost."

One of the officers, a young, very blond man, with tightly fitting dress coat and faultless kid gloves, here thought proper to make a remark.

"I cannot understand why our bride and groom make their wedding-tour to this out-of-the-way place, and not to the land of poesy—to Italy——"

The engineer laughed aloud.

"No more of that, Wilberg! Poesy in this marriage between money and rank! Besides, wedding-tours to Italy are so much the fashion that they must seem plebeian to Herr Berkow. The aristocracy go to their estates to pass the honeymoon, and above all things we must and will be aristocratic!"

"I fear there are more serious reasons," said the director. "The young gentleman might run the same career in Rome or Naples that he ran last year at the Residence, and it was high time to put an end to such extravagance. His expenditures at length rose into the hundred thousands. One can exhaust a fountain, and Herr Arthur was in a fair way to try this experiment for his father."

Herr Schäffer's thin lips curled derisively.

"The father reared his son in this way," he said;

"he only reaps what he has sown. But you may be right. In a solitude like this a man may perhaps sooner learn to yield to the control of a young wife. But I fear that this wife, with her small enthusiasm, undertakes no enviable task."

"Do you believe she has been coerced into the marriage?" asked Wilberg eagerly.

"Oh, no! not at all. Things in our day are not so tragically carried on. A little sensible persuasion, a clear insight into circumstances, brought it all about, and I have no doubt this marriage of convenience will in the end turn out to be quite endurable, as in most such cases."

The blond Herr Wilberg, who apparently had a passion for the tragic, mournfully shook his head.

"Ah, I fear not! If only, later, the true love awakes in this young woman's heart—if another—my God, Hartmann! couldn't you lead your men through another route? You are enveloping us all in a cloud of dust!"

The young miner Hartmann, who was passing at the head of a column of some fifty of his comrades, turned and threw a scornful glance upon the gala dress of the speaker, and then a second upon the dusty highway, where the rough shoes of the miners certainly raised a cloud of dust.

"Right-about—face!" commanded he, deigning no reply to Wilberg. The men obeyed and with military precision turned and took the designated course.

"A bear—this Hartmann!" said Wilberg, brush-

ing his coat with his handkerchief. "Had he even a word of apology for his rudeness! 'Right-about —face,' he said, with a tone of command as if he was a general at the head of his army! And what airs he gives himself! If his father had not interfered he wouldn't have allowed Martha Ewers to recite my poem in honor of the bride—my poem that I——"

"Have already read to all the world," added the chief engineer, turning to the director. "If it was only shorter! But our poet is right: it was a piece of impudence for Hartmann to forbid the recital. You should not have posted him and his men just here. We need not expect them to take part in the reception: they are the most obstinate fellows in the whole works."

"And also the most stately," said the director. "I have stationed all the others upon the route and in the village: the *élite* of our workmen belong to the triumphal arch. On such occasions we want to make the best show possible with our men."

The young miner Hartmann had meantime posted his comrades around the triumphal arch. The director was right: he was a stately fellow, towering at least a head above all his men. He was a powerful, strongly built figure, and looked especially distinguished in his dark miner's dress. According to the strict rules of beauty his face could not be called handsome: the forehead was somewhat too low, the lips too full, the lineaments not sufficiently noble. But these sharp, clearly cut fea-

tures were not commonplace. Flaxen curling hair clustered thick around the broad, massive forehead, while a wavy flaxen beard covered the lower part of the face, whose bronzed, healthy complexion did not betray its frequent withdrawal from the light and sunshine. The lips were curled in defiance, and in the blue, sullen eyes lay a something indescribable—an expression common natures at once felt and respected as superiority. Embodied energy spoke from this man's whole being, and little sympathy as his rigid bearing might awaken, at the first glance you felt his power.

An elderly man, who, although he wore the miner's dress, did not seem to belong to the workmen, now appeared, accompanied by a young girl.

"Good luck to you, comrades!" he said. "How is Ulrich? is everything in order?"

Ulrich nodded assent, while the men answered his salutation by a hearty "*Glück auf*, Herr Overseer!" But the glances of most turned to his young companion.

This young girl of twenty years was really very pretty, and the peasant costume of that region became her charmingly. Rather *petite* in stature, her crown scarce reached to the shoulder of the giant Hartmann; heavy dark braids surrounded her fresh, slightly sunburned face, with its blooming cheeks and clear blue eyes. Her form was robust, but yet graceful.

She made a gesture as if to reach her hand to Ulrich, but as he remained standing with folded

arms her own fell quickly. The overseer remarked this and fixed a sharp glance upon both.

"Are you in a bad humor because you couldn't have your own way for this once?" he asked. "Console yourself, Ulrich: it seldom enough happens; but when you go too far your father must interpose with his authority."

"If I had anything to say to Martha, I should say it," replied Ulrich decidedly; and his morose glance swept over the bouquet of rare hot-house flowers in her hand.

"I believe you," returned the old man: "it would be just like you. But Martha is my sister's child and must obey me. What is the matter with your triumphal arch up there? The flag-staff has sunken: fasten it up again or the structure will fall."

Ulrich, to whom this warning was evidently addressed, threw an indifferent glance up to the threatened garlands, but made no motion to come to their help.

"Do you not hear?" asked the father impatiently.

"It is my business to keep watch up here, not to stand by the arch," replied Ulrich.

"Can't you let the old grudge rest to-day?" asked the overseer angrily. "Well, one of you others attend to the matter."

The miners glanced at Ulrich as if waiting a word of assent from him, but none was given. Only one of the men moved as if to accede to the overseer's request. The young leader turned and gazed at him. It was but a single glance out of those

stern blue eyes, but it had the effect of a command. Every man at once stepped back; not another hand moved.

"I wish it would fall on your obstinate head!" cried the overseer in a rage, while with youthful alacrity he himself climbed up and bound the flag-staff. "Perhaps you would then learn how folks ought to behave at a festival; and you have spoiled Lorenz, who used to be the best of you, but now he only does what his lord and master Ulrich commands."

"Ought we to rejoice that a new aristocrat is coming to rule here?" asked Ulrich in a low tone. "I thought we had had enough of the old one."

The overseer, busied with the flag-staff, did not hear this remark; but Martha, who had stood silent at one side, turned quickly around and threw an anxious glance up to the arch.

"Help him, Ulrich, I beg you!" she said.

The obstinate young man made no answer, but his features were not a shade milder or more compliant. The girl stood motionless before him. She evidently wished to say something, but was half-afraid. At length she spoke softly:

"And will you really not come to the festival to-night?"

"*No!*"

"Ulrich!"

"Leave me alone, Martha! You know I do not like your dancing foolery!"

Martha started back, but her red lips curled in

scorn and the moist glimmer in her eyes was more tears of anger than of sorrow at her cousin's rudeness.

Ulrich did not remark this. He did not seem to trouble himself much about the girl. Without a word further she turned her back to him and went in another direction. The eyes of the young man, who had at last found courage to help about the flag-staff, followed her continually. He would no doubt have given much if the invitation had been to him rather than to Ulrich, who had declined it so indifferently.

Meantime the overseer had come down and was regarding his work with great complacency, when the first salute echoed from the hill. It was followed by a second and a third. This signal of the arrival of the long-expected bride and groom, as may be supposed, caused a great flutter. The officers were in lively commotion. The director once more scanned his preparations. The chief engineer and Herr Schäffer buttoned their gloves, and Wilberg hurried over to Martha to ask for perhaps the twentieth time if she was sure she knew his verses—if there was really not danger lest by some untimely fright she might peril his poetic triumph. Even the miners betrayed some curiosity to see this young and beautiful woman, their future mistress. More than one tightened his leather belt and pressed his hat down over his forehead. Ulrich alone stood quite unmoved, just as dumb and scornful as before, and threw not even a glance in the direction of the coming guests.

But the reception, arranged with so much expense and trouble, was to turn out quite otherwise than could have been hoped. A cry of horror from the overseer, who stood outside the arch, drew all glances in that direction; and what they saw was terrible enough.

Down the declivity leading to the village dashed, or rather *flew*, a coach, whose horses had become utterly unmanageable. Frightened probably at the salute, they stormed onward, swaying the coach hither and thither over the uneven road and threatening every moment to rush with it over the precipice to the right or hurl it against the giant trees at the left.

The coachman had lost all presence of mind. He had let go the reins and in mortal terror was clinging to his seat. From the hill, where the intervening trees shut out the sight of what had happened, still crashed shot after shot, goading the terrified animals to still greater fury. The fearful end of this mad journey was only too evident. The catastrophe must come at the bridge below.

The throng of people gathered in front of the house did what such throngs are wont to do on like occasions. They shrieked aloud with terror and ran helplessly up and down. It never occurred to one of them to offer the needed assistance: even among the miners, so accustomed to scenes of danger, no one seemed to have retained his presence of mind.

Ah! but there was one. Taking in the magnitude

of the danger at a glance, to hurl aside his father and his comrades, to rush forward, was for Ulrich but the work of a moment. In three bounds he had reached the bridge. An agonized cry from Martha followed him. Too late: he had already thrown himself in front of the horses and seized the reins. The frightened animals reared and then rushed forward with new impetuosity, carrying Ulrich along with them. Any other man would have been trodden under foot, but Ulrich's giant strength ere long prevailed. A powerful jerk at the reins, from which he had not for a moment loosed his hold, caused one of the horses to stumble. He fell and dragged down the other with him. The coach remained standing.

The young miner darted up the steps, in certain anticipation of finding the occupants of the coach, the lady at least, in a state of unconsciousness. This was the usual resource of aristocrats in the face of danger. But there was no swooning here, where, if in any place in life, swooning might have been justifiable. The young lady stood upright in the coach, convulsively clinging to the back of her seat with both hands, her wide-open, stony eyes fixed upon the precipice down which the next moment they were almost certain to be dashed; but not a syllable, not one cry of terror passed her firmly closed lips. Ready, when things came to the worst, to make a spring which would have been certain destruction, she had looked death calmly in the face, and her countenance showed that she had done so with the fullest self-possession.

The animals were yet struggling upon the ground and the danger was still great. Ulrich hastily took the lady in his arms and bore her from the carriage. It required only a few seconds to carry her over the bridge, but during that short space she fixed her dark eyes upon the man who with such contempt of death had thrown himself under the horses' hoofs, and his glance, too, swept that beautiful pale face which had so courageously met danger. This man had never before felt a soft, glistening silk dress in his arms or a fleecy white veil fluttering over his shoulder: a flush of embarrassment overspread his face, and he hastily, almost violently, set the lady down on the other end of the bridge.

Eugenie was still trembling, and now her lips parted for a deep sigh of relief; but this was the only sign of the agony she had endured.

"I—I thank you," she said. "Will you now look after Herr Berkow?"

Ulrich, who had been just about to do this, now paused unwittingly.

"Will you look after Herr Berkow?" said the young wife in a moment when any other woman in agonizing cries would have called after her husband, and she said it very coolly, very calmly. The young man remembered the words the officers had spoken about this marriage and went to look after Herr Berkow.

He needed no help. He had already left the carriage and was coming over the bridge. Arthur Berkow, even in this catastrophe, had not belied his

passive, indifferent nature. When the danger had come so unexpectedly and his young wife had made a motion as if to spring from the carriage, he had only placed his hand upon her arm and said in a low voice:

"Keep your seat, Eugenie! You are lost if you venture to spring out!"

Not another word or syllable had been exchanged between them. While Eugenie stood upright in the coach looking for help and resolved at the last moment to make the dangerous spring, Arthur remained immovable in his place; but as they neared the bridge he had for one short moment placed his hand over his eyes, expecting, no doubt, the next instant to be dashed in pieces.

Now he stood leaning against the railing of the bridge, perhaps a trifle paler than usual, but without trembling, without any visible token of excitement. Whether he really felt none or whether he controlled it even now, Ulrich must confess that there was something unusual in his apathy. The young heir had just looked death in the face, and now he looked at Ulrich as if that man who had rescued him from mortal danger was a sort of incomprehensible curiosity.

The *now* rather superfluous assistance came from all sides. Twenty hands were at once raised to lift up the prostrate horses and to help down the coachman, who was almost senseless from fright. The whole tide of officials rushed forward and overwhelmed the bride and groom with all sorts of

expressions of condolence and sympathy. They vied with each other in offers of help; they could not imagine how the accident had happened; they blamed the shots, the horses, and the coachman by turns. Arthur for some moments endured all this passively, then he made an evasive gesture.

"No more, gentlemen, I implore you! You see we are both unharmed. Let us, above all things, get to the house."

He offered his arm to Eugenie to conduct her there, but she lingered and gazed around.

"And our rescuer? I hope nothing has happened to him."

"Ah, yes, your rescuer! I had almost forgotten him," said the director, somewhat embarrassed. "It was Hartmann who held the horses. Hartmann, where are you?"

The man called did not answer, but Wilberg, who in his admiration for the romantic deed quite forgot his recent spite against the doer, cried eagerly, "There he stands; up there!" and hastened to the young miner, who stepped back as the officers crowded around him and now stood leaning against a tree.

"Hartmann, you should—heavens! what is the matter with you? You are as pale as death; and where does that blood come from?"

Ulrich was evidently struggling with a mortal faintness, but still an angry flush passed over his face as Wilberg made a movement to support him. Enraged at being seen in anything so like a swoon,

he hastily collected himself, rose to his full height, and pressed his clinched hands against his bleeding forehead.

"It is nothing at all—a mere scratch," he said. "If I only had a handkerchief."

Wilberg was just about to offer his, when suddenly a silk dress rustled near him. The young Frau Berkow stood at his side, and without a word reached her own handkerchief edged with costly lace.

The Baroness Windeg could never have been called upon to offer help to the wounded, else she would have known that this tiny elegantly embroidered cambric handkerchief was little designed to stay the blood which, as yet kept back by the thick masses of flaxen hair, now welled forth in a torrent. Ulrich, too, must have known this better than she: still, as if without knowing it, he reached his hand for the proffered handkerchief.

"Thanks, your ladyship, but that will not be of much use," said the overseer, who now stood at his son's side, with his arm around his shoulder. "Hold still, Ulrich!"

So saying, he drew forth his own coarse linen handkerchief and pressed it against the apparently deep wound.

Arthur Berkow now came up, accompanied by the other officers.

"Is it really dangerous?" he asked in a drawling tone.

With a start Ulrich broke loose from his father and stood erect, the blue eyes flashing scorn and defiance as he replied:

"Not at all dangerous; no one need trouble himself about it; I can help myself."

The words sounded rather disrespectful, yet the service just rendered had been too great for any one to reprove him. As for Arthur Berkow, he seemed only too glad that the answer relieved him of all further trouble.

"I will send my physician to you," he said in his listless, indifferent way; "but our thanks are still due you. For the present there is help enough. Shall we go, Eugenie?"

The young wife took the offered arm, but once more she turned her head to see if the needed help was really there. It seemed that the manner in which her husband had treated the affair did not meet her approval.

"Our whole reception is a failure," said Wilberg despondently as he a few minutes later joined the officers who had accompanied young Berkow and his bride to the house.

"And your poem also!" replied the chief engineer. "Who now thinks of verses and flowers? And to any one who believes in omens, this first entrance to the new home does not seem especially propitious—mortal danger, wounds, blood; but this is a romance just in your style, Wilberg. You can compose a ballad about it, only you will be forced for this once to make Hartmann your hero."

"And he is and always will remain a bear!" cried Wilberg excitedly. "Could he not even give our lady a word of thanks as she offered him her own

handkerchief? And how rude he was to Herr Berkow! But this man has a giant nature. When I asked him why in God's name he had not sooner bound up his wound, he answered laconically that he had not until just then remarked it. The idea! He received a blow on the head which would have knocked any one of us senseless; but he first stops the horses, lifts the lady out of the coach, and does not remark that he is wounded until the blood gushes out in a torrent!"

The miners meanwhile remained with their comrade. The manner in which the future chief had expressed his thanks to Hartmann had deeply wounded them. There were many morose faces, many indignant, cutting remarks: even the overseer had not now, as usual, an excuse for the young gentleman. He was still occupied in staying the blood from his son's wound, and Martha was assisting him.

This young girl's face wore such a look of unmistakable anguish that Ulrich must have noticed it if his eyes had not been turned in an opposite direction. It was a strangely intent and bitter glance which he sent after Arthur Berkow and the departing officers. He was evidently thinking of something quite other than the pain of the wound.

As he was about to bind a bandage around the still bleeding forehead, the overseer remarked that his son still held the lace handkerchief.

"This spider's web"—the old man's voice had an unusually bitter tone—"this embroidered spider's

web must have been of great use to us! Give it to Martha, my son: she can return it to our lady."

Ulrich glanced down at the handkerchief, which, soft and fragrant as a zephyr, lay between his fingers; but as Martha would take it he started, and hastily pressing it against the wound dyed the delicate lace blood-red.

"What are you doing?" cried the father, both surprised and angry. "Would you bandage this deep hole in your head with that gauzy thing? I thought we had bandages enough."

"Ah, yes, I did not think of that!" returned Ulrich hesitatingly. "Let it alone, Martha!" and without another word he tucked the handkerchief into his blouse pocket. The hands of the girl, until now so active, sank helplessly, and she looked on motionless as the father arranged the bandage. She fixed her eyes inquiringly upon Ulrich's face. Why did he wish to render the costly rag useless? Would he perhaps not give it back?

Young Hartmann seemed to have little talent for the sick *rôle*. He had already shown himself very impatient at the abundant offers of help: now he started up and declared, once for all, that it was enough; he would be left in peace.

"Let him be, the stubborn fellow!" said the overseer. "We can do nothing with him until we hear what the doctor says. You are my right hand, Ulrich! You would not help build the triumphal arch in honor of the young master and mistress—*that* would be too humiliating. But you could

throw yourself before the horses that were running away with that same master and mistress, and not trouble yourself in the least about the old father, who has nothing but you in the whole world! *Consistency*, I suppose you call that in your new-fashioned language! Well, you others—you would follow your lord and master in all things—it can really be no shame to you if you pattern after him in courage."

And with these words, which, in spite of their pretended resentment, very plainly showed pride in his son and tenderness for him, the old man took Ulrich's arm and led him away.

CHAPTER III.

It was early evening. The festivities upon the Berkow estates, at least so far as the young master and mistress could participate in them, were at an end. After the threatened catastrophe had been so happily averted and the excitement it had caused had died away, the original programme had been conscientiously carried out. Now, at last, Arthur and Eugenie, whose attention had been engrossed on every side, found themselves alone. Herr Schäffer, who was to return to-morrow to the Residence, had just taken his leave; and a servant, after having arranged the tea-table, had left the room.

The lamp, burning upon the table, threw its clear, mild light upon the pale-blue damask tapestry and the expensively covered furniture of this little parlor, which, like the other apartments of the house, had been newly and magnificently furnished for the reception of the bride.

This parlor belonged to her own suit of rooms. The closely drawn silk curtains quite excluded the gaze of the outside world; flowers exhaled their perfume from costly vases; and upon a table before the little corner sofa stood a silver tea-service, a

picture of quiet, harmonious domestic life in the midst of all this splendor.

But this household comfort seemed to have no spell to charm the young married pair. The bride, still in full society dress, stood in the middle of the room, holding in her hand the bouquet which Wilberg, in Martha's stead, had had the happiness of presenting her. The perfume of the orange-blossoms so absorbed her that she had not the slightest attention left to bestow upon her husband, who, in fact, did not demand such attention; for scarce had the door closed behind the servant when, with an expression of utter weariness, he sank upon a *fauteuil.*

"This eternal parade and ceremony is really killing! Do you not find it so, Eugenie? Since yesterday noon they have not allowed us a minute's peace! First the marriage, then the dinner, then that awfully tiresome rail and extra post-chaise journey, which took all night and the next forenoon; then that tragic interlude; here again receptions, introduction to officers, dinner. My papa, when he sketched the programme of these festivities, seems not at all to have thought that we possessed any such thing as nerves. Mine, I confess, are all unstrung."

The young wife turned her head and threw a very contemptuous glance upon the man who, at this their first solitary interview, spoke to her of his nerves. Eugenie seemed not at all acquainted with this malady. Her beautiful face wore not the slightest trace of exhaustion.

"Have you heard whether young Hartmann's wound is dangerous?" she asked, instead of answering her husband.

Arthur seemed surprised that no notice was taken of his exceptionally long speech.

"Schäffer says it is not of much account," replied he indifferently. "He has, I believe, spoken with the physician. And now it occurs to me, we must make the young man some recompense. I will have the director see about it."

"Ought you not to attend to the matter personally?"

"I? No, spare me that! As I incidentally hear, he is not a common workman, but the son of the overseer of the mines—a master-miner or something of that sort. How can I know whether money or a present would be most in place here? The director will arrange all this in the best manner."

He let his head sink still further back upon the cushions. Eugenie made no reply. She sat down on the sofa and rested her head upon her hand. After a pause of some minutes it seemed to occur to Arthur that he owed his wife some attention, and that he could not with propriety during the whole tea-hour bury himself in his *fauteuil*. It cost him some effort certainly, but he made the sacrifice and really arose. Sitting down by his wife's side, he allowed himself to clasp her hand, and even went so far as to try to place his arm around her waist; but it remained only an effort. With a passionate gesture Eugenie withdrew her hand and turned from

him. At the same time she gave him that very glance which had so deeply wounded his father in the church at his first embrace of his daughter-in-law. It was the same expression of icy, proud repulsion which, better than words, said: "I am unapproachable for thee and thine!"

It appeared far more easy to impress the father with this aristocratic manner than the son, perhaps because the son no longer allowed himself to be impressed by anything. He looked neither confounded nor intimidated at this token of an only too plainly expressed aversion: still, somewhat astonished he asked:

"Is this disagreeable to you, Eugenie?"

"*Unusual*, at least! You have hitherto spared me all this."

The young man was much too apathetic to comprehend the deep bitterness of these words: he appeared to take them as a sort of reproach.

"*Hitherto?* Yes, etiquette was somewhat strictly enforced in your father's house. During our two months engagement I never once had the happiness of seeing you alone. The constant presence of your father or brothers placed a constraint upon us which at the present undisturbed interview may well be removed."

Eugenie again drew back and in the iciest tone said:

"Let me declare to you, at this the first hour we have been left to ourselves, that I have no liking for expressions of fondness given because custom

demands them and in which the heart has no share. I for all time release you from this obligation."

Astonishment was still more vividly impressed upon Arthur's features, yet he did not allow himself to be excited.

"You seem to be in a strange mood to-day," he said. "Custom—heart! Really, Eugenie, I believed that with you, least of all, one need have fear of romantic illusions."

An expression of intense bitterness passed over the young bride's features.

"I renounced all my youthful illusions the moment I promised you my hand. You and your father—you would at any cost connect your name with the noble old name of Windeg, and thereby force entrance into circles hitherto strictly closed to you. Well, now you have won your goal. My name is Eugenie *Berkow!*"

She laid an infinitely scornful emphasis upon that last word. Arthur had risen. He seemed at length to comprehend that here there was something more to deal with than the ill-humor of a young wife, called forth, perhaps, by his neglect on the journey.

"You certainly do not appear to love this name much! I had not supposed that compulsion on the part of your family had led you to take it, but now it seems to me——"

"No one compelled me," interrupted Eugenie emphatically. "No one used over-persuasion. What I did was of my own free will, with the full consciousness of what I was taking upon myself.

It was bitter enough for my family to have me make this sacrifice for them."

Arthur shrugged his shoulders. His face showed that the conversation already began to weary him.

"I do not understand why you take a simple family arrangement so tragically. If my father in this matter had ulterior plans in view, the baron's motives were certainly of a no more romantic nature; only he might presumably have more pressing reasons for the conclusion of an engagement in which he certainly was not the losing party."

Eugenie started up, her eyes flashed, and with a passionate movement she threw the fragrant bouquet from the table to the floor.

"And you *dare* say this to me after what happened before your wooing? I believe that you must blush at this if you really were capable of blushing!"

The dull, half-veiled eyes of the young man suddenly opened wide: under their ashes there glowed something like fire, but his voice retained its languid, indifferent tone.

"I must beg you to speak more plainly. I cannot understand your enigmatical words."

Eugenie, with a passionate gesture, crossed her arms: her breast rose and fell in stormy emotion.

"You know as well as I," she said, "that we stood on the brink of ruin! As to whom we owed this, I cannot and must not judge. It is easy to fling stones at the man who is struggling with destiny. If one inherits his family estates encum-

bered, if he must uphold the luster of an ancient name, maintain his position in the world, and secure the future of his children, he cannot heap up wealth like the Berkows in their plebeian gains. You have squandered money from full hands; you have had every wish fulfilled, every caprice gratified. I have tasted the whole misery of a life which feigns, and must feign, outward splendor to the world, while every day, every hour, brings it nearer to inevitable ruin. Perhaps we might still have escaped if we had not fallen into your father's net. He from the first pressed his assistance upon us, urged it so persistently that at last he had all in his hands, and we, hunted, entangled, despairing, knew no way of escape. Then he came and demanded my hand for his son as the only price of rescue. My father would rather have borne the utmost than sacrifice me; but I would not see him sacrificed, forced from his career; I would not destroy the future of my brothers and see our name dishonored; and so I gave my consent. What it cost me no one of my family will ever know; but if I sold myself I can answer for it to God and my own conscience. You who submitted to be a tool in carrying out the ignoble plans of your father—you have no right to reproach me: my motives were at least more honorable than yours."

She was silent, overpowered by excitement. Her husband still stood motionless before her. His face again showed the slight paleness it had worn at mid-day as he had just been rescued from danger, but the eyes were again veiled.

"I regret that you did not make these explanations before our marriage," he said slowly.

"Wherefore?"

"Because you would then have been saved from the humiliation of being called Eugenie Berkow."

The young wife was silent.

"I had indeed no suspicion of these manipulations of my father," continued Arthur, "as I am accustomed to keep myself entirely aloof from his business affairs. He said to me one day that if I would go to Baron Windeg and sue for his daughter's hand my proposal would be accepted. I consented to the arrangement and went through with the formality of an introduction, followed in a few days by a betrothal. That is my share in the matter."

Eugenie turned away her head.

"I would have preferred an open confession of your joint knowledge of the transaction to this fable," returned she coldly.

Again the young man's eyes opened, and again glimmered in them that strange spark, which seemed about to burst into flame and yet was stifled by the ashes.

"And I stand so high in the estimation of my wife that she cannot even believe my word?" said he, this time with a decided touch of bitterness.

Eugenie's beautiful face, which she now turned to her husband, wore an expression of the deepest scorn, and the same expression was in her voice as she replied:

"You must forgive me, Arthur, if I place no

great confidence in you. From that day when you for the first time entered our house, and for a purpose of which I am only too well aware, until now, I have only known you from the speech of the Residence, and this——"

"Painted my picture in no flattering way! I can imagine that. Will you have the goodness to tell me what the Residence was really pleased to say about me?"

The young wife fixed her large eyes reproachfully upon her husband's face.

"They said that Arthur Berkow indulged in a princely expenditure, squandered thousands upon thousands to purchase the society and friendship of the young nobility, and thereby make the world forget his plebeian birth. They said that in the wild, unbridled life of a certain circle his life was wildest and most unbridled of all. What else they said about him does not lie within the range of a woman's criticism."

Arthur's hand, still resting on the arm of the *fauteuil* against which he leaned, had during these last words involuntarily clutched at the velvet upholstery.

"And you naturally do not deem it worth your while to attempt the reformation of a reprobate over whom public opinion has already broken its staff?"

"*No!*"

It rang icy cold, this *no*. A slight quiver passed overthe young man's face, but he quickly subdued it.

"You are more than open-hearted! Yet it is always a good thing to know how people stand in relation to each other; and as we now stand so we must remain. The step taken yesterday cannot be recalled, at least not immediately, without exposing us both to ridicule. If you provoked this scene to show me that I, in spite of the plebeian presumption which won your hand by force, must keep myself as far as possible aloof from the Baroness Windeg—and I fear this alone was your intention—you have won your goal; but"—here Arthur again relapsed into his old drawling, *blasé* tone—"but I beg you let this be the first and last of that sort of thing between us. I detest all kinds of scenes; my nerves cannot endure them; and life may be regulated so as to avoid these unnecessary *echauffements.* For the present, I believe I best carry out your wishes by leaving you alone. You will excuse me if I withdraw."

He took the silver candlestick which stood lighted upon the table and left the room, but outside he paused a moment and turned back his head. The spark now more than glimmered in the young man's eyes; it flamed luridly, but only for a moment; then all again became void and dead. But the candle flickered as he walked through the anteroom: was it from the draught or because the hand that held it trembled?

Eugenie remained alone, and a deep sigh of relief escaped her breast as the door closed behind her husband. She had attained her wish. As, after this

scene, she felt a need of the open air, she stepped to the balcony, drew aside the curtain, and half-opening the window gazed out into the partially overcast, but balmy spring night. The stars glimmered faintly through the light veil-like clouds which covered the whole sky, while the contours of the landscape, already enveloped in shadows, were scarce distinguishable. From the terrace arose the perfume of flowers and the light murmur of a fountain. Over all lay deep repose and peace—over all but the heart of the young wife up there who to-day for the first time had crossed the threshold of her new home.

It was now at an end—the dumb, anguished struggle of the last two months; and she had borne up through all. To heroic natures there is always something great in the thought of sacrificing their whole future for others—in purchasing freedom, in giving themselves an offering to inexorable destiny for those they love. But now when the sacrifice was consummated, when its object was achieved, when there was nothing more for which to struggle, nothing more to overcome, the romantic illusion with which Eugenie had hitherto surrounded her filial love was dispelled, and the terrible emptiness and dreariness of the life before her opened to her view.

On the soft, odorous breathings of this spring night arose again the long-restrained anguish cry of this young girl who had demanded her full share in the happiness and love of life and had been so

cruelly defrauded of all. She was young and beautiful—more beautiful than so many other more fortunate ones. She was from an old, noble race; and the daughter of the Windegs had ever adorned the hero of her youthful dreams with all the shining, chivalrous qualities of her ancestors. That he must be her equal in name and rank was self-evident; and now——

Had the husband forced upon her acceptance possessed that character and energy she most prized in man, she might perhaps have forgiven his plebeian birth; but this weakling, whom she had despised even before she knew him!

Why, the insults she had deliberately and intentionally hurled at him, and which would have made any other man beside himself, had not for a moment roused him from his stolid indifference. Even the bitterest expressions of her contempt had only for one brief instant awakened him from his apathy. And to-day noon, in the danger which had threatened them both, he had not so much as lifted his hand to rescue himself or her. Another, a stranger, must fling himself before the raging horses and curb them at the risk of his own life.

Before Eugenie's sight arose the image of that young man with the scornful blue eyes and the bleeding forehead. Her husband did not even know whether the wound was dangerous or perhaps mortal; and yet both he and she would have been lost but for that energetic, lightning-winged deed.

The young wife sank into a chair and buried her

face in both hands. All through which in these last months she had fought and suffered pressed with tenfold weight upon her soul, and found expression in this one wild, despairing cry: "Oh, my God, my God! How shall I endure this life?"

CHAPTER IV.

The very extensive Berkow mines lay at some distance from the capital and in a remote part of the province. There was little attractive about this region. For miles around lay wooded hills and mountains, the monotonous dark green of the firs covering vale and upland alike; and here and there was a village or hamlet, a farm or country-seat.

The soil was of small account: its treasures lay buried within the earth; and all the life and activity here centered around the Berkow mines, whence in prodigal abundance these treasures were brought up to the light of day.

The Berkow possessions lay solitary and quite cut off from the business marts, the nearest town being some hours distant; but these giant and complex mining interests had of themselves called into existence a town in the midst of this wooded valley. Hither had been summoned all those aids which industry and science could afford, all that the power of machinery or the strength of human hands could offer, to wrest their wealth from the malicious spirits of the mountains. A great retinue of officers, machinists, inspectors, and overseers followed the lead of the director-in-chief and formed a colony of themselves; while the workmen, numbering several thousands, dwelt in the adjoining villages.

This business, which the proprietor had from small beginnings expanded to its present magnitude, seemed almost too great for the means of a private citizen, and was, indeed, carried on only by the most colossal expenditure. It was by far the greatest mining interest in the province, and in large measure controlled all other industries of the kind. This colony, with its boundless outlays in machinery and wages, with its business and dwelling houses, its officers and workmen, was in a certain sense a state in itself, and its owner as much a sovereign as the ruler of a small principality.

It seemed strange that a man who stood at the head of such vast concerns should always be denied the honor of a title—that honor for which beyond all others he strove, and which is bestowed upon many who do far less for the industry of their country; but here, as everywhere, when the decision comes from those highest in authority, the character and personality of the aspirant were called in question; and Berkow did not possess the sympathy of the government. There were many dark spots in his past life which his wealth might, indeed, partially efface, but could not wholly obliterate.

He had certainly never come in conflict with the laws, but often enough he had gone to the utmost limit the law allows. His transactions in the province, vast as was their magnitude, were in many respects not such as honest men would care to imitate. There was much talk of a system of unprincipled speculations, calculated only to enhance

the wealth of the proprietor and having no regard to the weal or woe of the workmen. There were also rumors of the irresponsible tyranny of the officers and the increasing discontent of the miners; but the colony was too distant for the reports to be verified, and they remained mere rumor. One thing, however, was certain: these mines continued to be an inexhaustible fountain of wealth for their owner.

It must be confessed that the persistence and industrial genius of this man were at least as great as his lack of principle. From the humblest circumstances, borne upward on the wave of life and then dashed down, he had once more risen, and had at last succeeded in reaching those sunny heights where he had for years held his undisputed place of millionaire.

For the last few years Fortune had proved his steadfast friend. Often as he had put her constancy to the test, she had remained true; and whether he dealt with moderate ventures or embarked in the most daring speculations, all he touched seemed to turn to gold.

Berkow had early become a widower and had contracted no second marriage. His restless character, his wild passion for gain, had little in common with a domestic life: such a life he had always felt a fetter rather than a solace. His only son and heir had grown up in the Residence. No pains or expense had been spared in his education. He had had private teachers in all branches, a university

course, and much foreign travel, but nothing had been done to qualify him for his future career as chief and director of a great industrial establishment. Mr. Arthur showed a decided aversion to learning anything beyond the absolute requirements of fashionable culture, and the father had been much too weak and too vain to insist on a more serious or deeper education than that which would fit his son to play a brilliant *rôle* in society. For the attainment of this goal he cheerfully lavished thousands. He knew that in an extremity Arthur would always find enough capable officers, whose mechanical and business services could be bought with money, and why need the young man trouble himself to learn such things?

And so the elder Berkow, who lived alternately at the Residence and upon his estates, took upon himself the entire business management, while the son, who scarce visited the mines once a year, was during his brief sojourn always *ennuyéd* to death.

The weather thus far had not been propitious to the newly wedded pair. The sun had seldom shone this spring, but at last, after a long succession of rainy days, he came out as if to greet the Sabbath. The shafts were empty, the works deserted; but despite the Sudnay rest and the laughing sunshine, something of the melancholy, constrained atmosphere of this region seemed to rest upon the whole colony.

In all these numerous business and dwelling houses, not the slightest idea of beauty or of the

comfort of their inmates was visible. They had been built solely for use. But that this sense of beauty was not wanting in the proprietor, his own country-house gave ample proof. It stood at some little distance from the works, on a magnificent site, with a full view of the wooded hills and distant mountains. Outside and in, this dwelling was adorned with more than princely luxury, and with its balconies, terraces, and flower-gardens lay like an oasis full of perfume and poesy in the midst of this domain of industry.

The small house of Overseer Hartmann stood midway between the mansion house and the mines, and its aspect showed that its owner enjoyed a most favorable position. Hartmann, when a young, active miner, had married a girl in the service of Frau Berkow and an especial favorite of her mistress.

After her marriage the young wife remained more or less in her old relations to the family, and in consequence her husband received many favors, being advanced from post to post, until at last he was appointed under-overseer. These relations and the favors also had ceased after the lady's death, for Herr Berkow was not a man to give himself much trouble about any former member of his household. Hartmann's wife died soon after, and there was no more intimacy at the master's house; but during these years the overseer had formed a strong attachment to the Berkow family, and he was allowed to keep the easy position he had then attained—a position in which he had no personal experience of the usual hard work and poor pay of the miners.

He had some years ago adopted Martha Ewers, the orphan daughter of his sister. Martha kept his house, but his secret wish that she and his son should marry seemed to have no prospect of fulfillment.

On this Sunday morning the once quiet little house was the theater of a rather exciting scene, such as had got to be of no rare occurrence between this father and son. The overseer, standing in the center of the small sitting-room, was very excitedly talking to Ulrich, who had just returned from the director's, and now, silent and morose, leaned against the door, while Martha, standing a little aside, gazed at both with an anxiety she could not conceal.

"Have I lived to see this?" cried the overseer. "Have you not enemies enough among the gentlemen over there already but you must needs offend them still more? Our proprietor offers you a sum large enough to found a household of your own, and you, stubborn fellow, without the least hesitation say *no!* But what do you care, indeed, about a household or any such thing? What do you think about ever taking a wife? Whenever you come from work your head is stuck in a newspaper; and half the night through you sit over your books and stuff your brains full of all that new-fashioned stuff an honest miner has no need to know his whole life long. Among your comrades you play the master; so that next thing they will be asking no longer the Herr Director, but Herr Ulrich Hartmann, what must be done upon the works. And if they should

chance to be reminded that you were once only a common miner, then they would speak of this reward and bring the whole story again to the remembrance of our superiors. I should think if ever a man honorably earned money it was you in this affair!"

Ulrich, who had hitherto listened in silence, now stamped angrily.

"But I tell you I will accept nothing from that set over there. I have declared to you that I want no reward, will receive none, for my so-called act of heroism they are making such a fuss about; and I stand by my word."

The old man started up anew, and was just about to give his son another and more angry lecture when Martha stepped between.

"Let him be, uncle," she said: "he is right."

The overseer, quite disconcerted by these unexpected words, looked at her with open mouth.

"Ah! he is right?" repeated he angrily. "Well I might suppose that you would again take his part."

"Ulrich cannot bear to have this offer made through the director and without other acknowledgment," continued the girl decidedly, "and it is not at all the proper way. If Herr Berkow had only himself spoken a word of thanks or something of the kind; but really he gives himself no trouble about anything in the world. He always looks as if he had just wakened from sleep, and as if it gave him a painful effort even to look at one; and if he really does not sleep he lies all day on his sofa and stares up at the ceiling——"

"Leave the young gentleman alone!" interrupted the overseer hastily. "His father is responsible for all. In childhood he allowed him his own way and was pleased even with his naughtiness. Every day he would tell the boy how rich he was going to be and drive away tutors and servants if Arthur did not agree with them. As he grew up he must associate with counts and barons; money was given him in heaps; and the wilder he was the better his father was pleased. Certainly such a young fellow must lose some of his goodness of heart. And Arthur was good: I hold fast to that. How often when a little fellow did he ride upon my knee! He had a heart too. After his mother died and they were about to take him to the city, I remember how he hung about my neck and, weeping bitterly, begged not to be sent away.

"Herr Berkow flattered him and promised him ever so many fine things when they got out into the great world; but I had to carry him to the coach. After he had been in the city awhile with *bonnes* and tutors all this was over; but the next time I met him he shook hands with me. Then he grew colder and more aristocratic, and now—" An expression of pain passed over the old man's face, but he shook off this weakness. "Well, in the long run it will all be the same to me, but I cannot bear that you, Martha, at every opportunity should go on in this way about our young gentleman. Ulrich, as we know, has a real hatred against him. But supposing that obstinate boy there had been left to

have his own way and some hundred thousands besides, we may well imagine what he would have made."

"Perhaps something worse, father, but certainly not such a weakling as he," replied Ulrich bitterly. "You may rely upon that."

The conversation, which threatened to take an unpleasant turn, now happily ended. There was a knock at the outside door, and directly after entered a servant in the rich but somewhat over-ornamented livery of the Berkow house.

"Good-day!" he said to the overseer. "My lady sends me on an errand to your Ulrich. Ah! there you are, Hartmann. Her ladyship wishes to speak with you—this evening, at seven precisely, I am to introduce you to her."

"*Me!*"

"*Ulrich!*"

Both exclamations came with equal surprise from the lips of the overseer and his son, while Martha, just as astonished, gazed at the servant, who indifferently added:

"It must be something the director is concerned in, Hartmann. Very early this morning he was with our lady, who is not in the habit of troubling her husband about business matters, and right away after I was dispatched to you, although we really have enough to do to-day. All the officers are invited to dine, and I don't know how many are coming from the city to pay their respects—but I haven't a moment's time. Be punctual—at seven, after dinner."

The man gave a hasty nod as his parting salutation and hurried away.

"Now we are in for it!" exclaimed the overseer angrily. "All this has something to do with your senseless refusal. Now see how you will arrange matters with them!"

"Will you go, Ulrich?" asked Martha, with a quick, eager expression.

"What are you thinking of, girl?" replied the uncle. "Do you imagine he could say 'No' when her ladyship summoned him?"

Martha did not notice the interruption. She approached her cousin and laid her hand on his arm.

"Will you go?" she repeated softly.

Ulrich stood there, gazing morosely at the floor, as if in conflict with himself. All at once he passionately threw back his head.

"Certainly I will. I want to know what her ladyship may be pleased to want of me, when for a whole week she has not even given herself the trouble to inquire——"

He paused suddenly, as if he had already said too much. Martha's hand had glided down from his arm and she stepped back, but the overseer said with a sigh:

"Now God help us if you are going over there! Unluckily old Berkow came home last evening. If you have a talk together, then you will no longer be a master-miner here and I no longer overseer. I know the man."

A scornful expression played around the young man's lips.

"Be calm, father! You know too well how much you depend upon the Berkows and how much need that untaught son may have of you, for he will never submit to taking the control here. They will have no other in your place, and I"—here, with scornful self-consciousness, Ulrich drew himself up to his full height—"I, before all others, shall remain here. They *dare* not send me away: they fear me too much."

He turned his back to his father, flung open the door, and went out into the open air. The overseer clasped his hands and seemed inclined to give his rebellious son another severe lecture, but he was prevented by Martha, who anew, and this time much more decidedly, took Ulrich's part. Weary of contention, the old man at last took his pipe and was about to leave the house.

"Listen, Martha," he said, turning at the door: "I see you think no obstinacy so great as his, but there is yet one which surpasses it. You have found your master in Ulrich, and he will also find his master, so true as my name is Gotthold Hartmann."

Up at the country-house all were busied in preparations for the great dinner. The servants ran upstairs and downstairs; in the work-rooms bustled around cooks and maid-servants; everywhere there was something to change or to arrange; and the whole house showed that picture of restless activity usual in preparing for a feast.

So much the more profound was the stillness

which ruled in the apartments of young Berkow. The curtains were closely drawn, the *portières* closed, and in the adjoining room, with noiseless step, a servant glided up and down over the thick carpet, arranging this and that. His master, above all things, liked to lie the greater portion of the day, lazily dreaming, upon the sofa, and would not be disturbed by the slightest sound.

The young heir, with half-closed eyes, lay outstretched upon a sofa. He held a book in his hand, in which he read, or at least seemed to have been reading, although for quite a while the same page had lain open before him. Apparently it cost him too much effort to turn the leaves, and now the carelessly held volume slipped out of the small white hands upon the carpet. It would have been but slight effort to bend forward and pick up the book, still slighter to call the servant to do this; but neither effort was made. The book remained lying upon the carpet, and for the next quarter of an hour Arthur did not make the least motion, but his face plainly showed that he was neither thinking over his reading nor lost in dreams: he was simply *ennuyéd.*

A rather reckless opening of the door which led from the corridor into the adjoining room and a loud, domineering voice made a speedy end of this most interesting employment. In entering the anteroom old Berkow asked if his son was within, and receiving an affirmative answer he dismissed the servant, shoved back the *portière*, and stepped

up to Arthur. His face was flushed, either with vexation or anger, and the cloud which already lay upon his forehead grew darker at sight of Arthur.

"Are you really here, lying upon this sofa, just as you lay three hours ago?"

Arthur seemed not to be accustomed to show his father even the outward forms of respect. He had not taken the least notice of his entrance, and now it did not occur to him to change his negligent position in the least.

The furrows upon the father's brow grew still deeper.

"Your apathy and laziness really begin to be past all conception! It is more vexatious here than in the Residence. I thought you would pay some small regard to my wishes, at least take some share in carrying forward the arrangements I was making on your account, but——"

"My God, papa!" interrupted the young man, "do you really ask me to trouble myself about workmen, machines, and such things? I have never done it, and I really cannot understand why you have sent us here. I am *ennuyéd* to death in this desert."

The words indeed showed the deepest *ennui*, but they had none the less the tone of the spoiled darling son who had been wont to see his whims regarded at all times and in all places, and who took even the least hint of any discomfort as an offense. But something must have happened to enrage the father, for this time he was not yielding as usual.

"I am accustomed to see you *ennuyéd* in all places and under all circumstances, while I alone must bear all the care and burden. Just now I am beset on every side. Your expenses in the capital have at last begun to go beyond even my means. To release the Windegs from their obligations has cost me dear enough, and here I find nothing but endless trouble and vexation. I have this morning had a conference with the director and the higher officers, and am compelled to hear complaints and nothing but complaints. Extensive repairs are demanded in the mines—better wages, new buildings: nonsense! As if I had time and money for all this!"

Arthur listened unsympathetically, as usual. If his face expressed anything at all, it was the wish that his father would go away. But this did not happen. He began to walk excitedly up and down the room.

"Trust to one's officers and their advice! For half a year I have not been here personally, and all is going to rack and ruin. They speak of secret conspiracies among the workmen, of grave symptoms, of threatening danger; as if they had not full power to draw the reins as tightly as possible. Before all, a certain Hartmann is pointed out to me as rebel-in-chief, who among his comrades passes for a new sort of Messiah and secretly throws all the works into insurrection, and when I ask why they did not send him away long ago, what do I receive for my answer? They *dare* not! There is no fault

to be found with his work and his comrades cling to him with blind idolatry: there would be a revolution in the works if he were sent away. I took the liberty to inform the gentlemen that they were all cowards and that I would take the matter into my own hands. The mines remain as they were and the wages will not be raised one iota. The slightest insubordination will be met with the utmost severity, and this head mutineer I will myself dismiss this very day."

"You cannot do that, papa," said Arthur hastily and half-rising from his seat.

"And why not?" asked Berkow in great surprise.

"Because it was this very Hartmann who caught our horses and saved our lives."

Berkow gave a repressed exclamation of anger.

"And must it really be this man? Certainly he cannot be sent away without some further reason: we must wait for an excuse. Besides, Arthur"—and here he glanced frowningly at his son—"it was rather vexatious that I had first to hear of this accident through strangers. You did not think it worth your while to write me even a word about it."

"Why should I?" The young man wearily rested his head upon his hand. "The thing all turned out fortunately, and besides, they almost overwhelmed us with expressions of sympathy, congratulations, questions, and orations over the matter. I do not think life worth enough to make such an ado about its rescue."

"Is that your honest opinion?" asked the father,

with a fixed gaze upon his son's face. "I thought you had been married only the day before."

Arthur did not answer: he only yawned. Berkow's eyes fastened themselves still more searchingly upon his son's face.

"To come to the point, what is the trouble between you and your wife?" he asked quickly, bluntly, and without the least circumlocution.

"Between me and my wife?" repeated Arthur, as if he just began to comprehend the drift of the conversation.

"Yes, between you two. I thought to surprise a young married pair in the first week of their honeymoon, and I find a state of things here of which I certainly did not dream. You ride alone; you drive out alone; neither of you enters the other's apartments. You evidently avoid each other, and when you meet you do not speak half a dozen words. What does all this mean?"

The young man had risen and now stood opposite his father, but he still retained his sleepy air.

"You show a wonderful knowledge of details, papa, which you could not possibly have gained from our half-hour's interview yesterday evening. Have you been questioning the servants?"

"*Arthur!*" Berkow would have flown into a passion, but his usual deference to his son allowed him to overlook this rudeness. He kept his temper under full control.

"Here, it seems, they are not accustomed to the aristocratic mode of life," continued Arthur coolly.

"We are in this respect particularly aristocratic. And you love aristocracy so much, papa!"

"Have done with this raillery!" said Berkow impatiently. "Is it with your free consent that your wife allows herself to ignore you in a way that is even now the talk of the whole colony?"

"I give her the freedom to do exactly what I permit myself."

Berkow sprang passionately from his chair.

"This is going altogether too far. Arthur, you are——"

"Not like you, papa," interrupted the son. "With the promissory notes of her father in my hand I certainly would have forced no girl's consent."

The hot flush in Berkow's face at once changed to ashy paleness. He started back involuntarily as he asked in a trembling voice:

"What—what do you mean by that?"

Arthur was fully roused from his lethargy, and his eyes had some life as he fixed them on his father.

"Baron Windeg was ruined: all the world knew that. Who had ruined him?"

"Do *I* know?" asked Berkow sneeringly. "His extravagances, his desire to play the great hereditary gentleman when he was head over ears in debt. He would have been lost without my help."

"Really? And did you follow no plan in offering this help? Was not this alternative placed before the baron—to give up his daughter or be driven to extremities? Did he decide upon this union of his own free will?"

Berkow laughed constrainedly.

"Naturally! Who has told that it was otherwise?"

But despite the confident tone his glance sank. The man had perhaps never yet cast down his eyes when accused of an unprincipled act: here, before his son, he did it. An expression almost of bitterness passed over the young man's listless features: if he had hitherto cherished a doubt, now he knew.

After a momentary pause Arthur resumed the conversation.

"You know that I never was inclined to marriage; that I only yielded to your persistent urging. I was indifferent to Eugenie Windeg, as to all others; I did not even know her; but I took her own and her father's consent, aware that she would not be the first who had sacrificed freely an old name for riches. It did not please you to tell me what passed before my betrothal or what followed it. From Eugenie's lips I first heard of the business arrangement you had made for us both. We will let that rest; the thing is done and cannot be undone; but you will now well understand why I decline to expose myself to new humiliations. I have no desire to stand a second time before my wife as upon that evening when she flung the full weight of her scorn against me and my father, and I—had to be silent."

Berkow, who had stood by silent and with half-averted gaze, at these last words quickly turned and measured his son with an astonished glance.

"I did not believe that anything could enrage you to such a degree," he said slowly.

"Enrage me? You are in error. There was no such thing as getting enraged between us. My wife from the first placed herself so high upon the pedestal of her exalted virtues and her aristocratic birth that I, who in both these respects was unworthy to stand before her, could only admire her from a respectful distance. Seriously, I advise you to do the same if you should once in a while chance to enjoy the pleasure of her company."

With contemptuous indifference he again threw himself on the sofa, but in his scorn there was a deep exasperation Berkow had never before remarked in him. The father felt too painfully the *rôle* he had played in this wily transaction in behalf of his son, and wished to dismiss the subject as soon as possible.

"We will speak of this at a more convenient time," he said, drawing out his watch. "Let it rest to-day. There are still two hours before the arrival of our guests. I must drive out to the upper works. Will you not accompany me?"

"No," replied Arthur, again relapsing into his wonted indolence.

Berkow made no attempt to urge his son. The refusal just now gratified him. He turned and went, leaving the young man to silence and apathy.

Outdoors the first sunny spring day smiled down on the earth; the hills breathed forth incense; the forests glowed in the splendor of the sunbeams; but

there lay Arthur Berkow, in that half-darkened room, with drawn curtains and closed doors, as if he alone, of all living things, was not created for the free mountain air and the golden sunshine. The air was too rough for him; the sun too bright; the prospect dazzled him; a ramble outdoors would have made him inexpressibly nervous and exhausted. The young heir, at whose command stood all this world and life can give, felt to-day, as he often had felt before, that this world and this life were horribly empty and dreary—that it was really not worth the while to have been born.

CHAPTER V.

The brilliant dinner, with its prodigal magnificence, was at an end. It had been an especial triumph for Herr Berkow. The nobility of this region were in the highest degree exclusive, and had hitherto never allowed themselves to enter the house of a *parvenu* whose doubtful past had thus far excluded him from aristocratic society.

But the invitations bearing the name of Eugenie Berkow, *née* Baroness Windeg, were accepted on all sides. She was and would remain the daughter of one of the oldest noble families, and they could and would not wound her by declining the invitation, so much the less as what had forced her to this marriage was no secret.

But if they met the young wife with the fullest respect and sympathy, they could not possibly be otherwise than polite to her father-in-law, in whose house the entertainment was given. And they were polite to him. Berkow was triumphant; he well knew that this was only the prelude to what must next winter be repeated in the Residence. They certainly would not drop the Baroness Windeg from their circle, because she had sacrificed herself out of love for her father; they would as formerly

regard her their equal in birth, in spite of the plebeian name she now bore. And so far as this name was concerned, the goal so ardently longed for he hoped lay not far distant.

If the ambitious millionaire felt himself newly indebted to his daughter-in-law, although she had to-day more than ever put on the airs of a princess and remained wholly unapproachable to him and his circle, on the other side the behavior of his son had as much surprised as vexed him. Arthur, who had moved exclusively in aristocratic circles, now seemed all at once to have lost his taste for this kind of society. He had treated his distinguished guests with such an icy politeness, maintaining even toward the officers of the garrison, with whom during his residence here he had always been on a most intimate footing, such an intentional reserve that he more than once passed those bounds which a host cannot allow himself to pass without giving offense. Berkow did not understand this new mood. What could his son mean? Did he design to offend his wife by this almost scornful neglect of her guests?

The gentlemen and ladies from the town had been obliged to leave early, as the long-continued rains had rendered the drive of several miles scarce safe after dark. Their departure gave the lady of the house liberty to withdraw, a privilege of which she at once availed herself. Leaving the reception-rooms, she went to her own apartments, while her husband and father-in-law remained with the guests.

At the appointed hour Ulrich Hartmann appeared. Since his early childhood, since with the death of Frau Berkow the connection of his parents with her house had ceased, he had not entered it. For the workmen, the country-seat of their chief, with its terraces and gardens, was a closed Eldorado, which only the officers might enter now and then, when summoned by especially important business or on invitation. The young man strode through the lofty vestibule, richly adorned with blooming plants, up the carpeted stairs, and through the brilliantly lighted corridors, until in the last the messenger of the morning met him and showed him into one of the apartments. "Her ladyship will soon appear," he said, and closing the door behind him left Ulrich alone.

It was a large, richly decorated anteroom, the beginning of a suit of state apartments, which at this moment were quite empty. The company was in the dining-hall opening upon the garden. But the emptiness, voidness, and silence of these rooms only made their magnificence more apparent. Through all the wide-opened *portières* Ulrich could with unobstructed glance survey the long suits of splendid rooms, each seeming to surpass the other in magnificence.

The heavy dark velvet carpets seemed to absorb the light, but so much the more brightly it played around the silk and satin covering of the furniture, the richly gilded ornamentation of the doors and windows, upon the mirrors, reaching to the ceiling,

which reflected it in flashing rays; so much the more brilliantly did it illuminate the paintings, statues, and vases which in costly and lavish profusion adorned these rooms. All that wealth and taste could give was gathered here in a fullness of beauty and splendor that might well dazzle an eye accustomed to the dark labyrinths of the mines.

But this magnificence, which certainly would have bewildered any of his comrades, failed to make the slightest impression upon Ulrich. His eyes, indeed, glanced sullenly over the brilliant apartments, but no admiration beamed from them. As if he would quarrel with every one of the costly things, he surveyed them all, then suddenly, as if in flaming hatred, he turned his back upon the whole suit of rooms, stamping violently in his impatience that no one yet appeared. Ulrich Hartmann evidently was not the man to wait patiently in antechambers until some one condescended to receive him.

At last there was a rustling behind him. He turned and started back involuntarily, for a few steps from him, under the chandelier, stood Eugenie Berkow. He had seen her only once, when he bore her from the carriage: she was then in a simple traveling-dress of dark silk, while her face was half-thrown in shadow by riding-hat and veil; and from this meeting he had taken but one remembrance—the large, dark eyes which had been so steadfastly fixed upon his face. This figure before him was quite another from any that had ever ap-

peared to the young man's sight. Rare, delicate lace fell in light ripples over the white silk dress, which like a silvery cloud enveloped the tall, slender form. Here and there lay white roses amid the airy woof, and a wreath of roses was twined in the rich blond hair, whose pale glitter seemed to vie with the luster of the pearls which adorned the lovely neck and arms.

The full glow of the wax candles poured a flood of light over the beautiful apparition, which seemed created for the gorgeous flame of these surroundings. And there the young bride stood before the miner, Ulrich Hartmann, as if nothing of the common, working, every-day world could come in contact with her. But vividly as her whole appearance indicated the aristocratic *salon dame*, in which *rôle* she had appeared before her guests, her eyes betrayed that she could be something better as in undisguised satisfaction they rested upon the young man whom she now approached with a cordial, friendly air.

"I am glad you answered my summons. I wished to speak with you—to explain a misunderstanding. Please follow me."

She opened a side door and entered an adjoining room. Ulrich followed. It was her own parlor, which lay between her chamber and the reception-rooms; but what a contrast it bore to them! Here the pale subdued light of the lamp floated over the delicate blue of the walls and the silk upholstery; soft carpets deadened every foot-fall; flower perfumes, delicate and sweet, pervaded all the air.

Ulrich, as if spell-bound, paused upon the threshold. He felt no timidity; but things here were so different from what they had been in the glittering state apartments—so much more beautiful, so dreamily silent. He could not recall the hatred with which he had gazed upon the magnificence outside. Instead of this, other emotions swayed him—emotions he had never before experienced and to which he could give no name, but they were in unison with these new surroundings.

And yet at this very moment a passionate tide of anger passed over him. He drew back instinctively, as from some scarce-defined danger, and his whole nature rose in dumb, deadly hostility against this atmosphere of beauty and perfume with its enticing spell. Eugenie had remained standing, as with some surprise she remarked that the young miner did not follow her. She now sank down on a lounge near the door, while her eyes critically scanned his face. The curling blond hair quite covered the fresh scar, but the wound, which for any other would have been dangerous, had scarce been able to affect this robust nature. Eugenie vainly sought in his features a trace of recent suffering. Still, her first question was in relation to the injury.

"Have you fully recovered?" she asked. "Does the wound really give you no more pain?"

"No, my lady: it was not worth mentioning."

Eugenie seemed not to have noticed the short, bitter tone of the answer. Kindly as at first she continued:

"I heard the very next day from the physician that there was no danger, otherwise we should have shown greater anxiety for you. After his second visit to you the doctor repeatedly assured me that there was nothing to fear, and Herr Wilberg, who on the evening of that eventful day I sent to you, brought me the same intelligence."

At the first words Ulrich had lifted his eyes and looked fixedly at her; his gloomy forehead slowly cleared and his voice had a milder tone as he at length answered:

"I did not know that you had troubled yourself so much, gracious lady. Herr Wilberg did not tell me that he came from you, or——"

"Or you would have received him more kindly," added Eugenie with a light tone of reproach. "He complained of your rudeness to him that evening, and still he was full of sympathy for you, and with the most friendly satisfaction offered to obtain for me the desired intelligence. What have you against Herr Wilberg?"

"Nothing. But he plays the guitar and makes verses."

Eugenie laughed involuntarily at this rather singular, but still exhaustive description of the blond young officer.

"That seems to be no especial recommendation in your eyes," said she half-jestingly; "but I believe that even you might be guilty of such things if you held Herr Wilberg's place in life. But let that pass. It was for something else I sent for you.

As I hear"—the young woman, somewhat embarrassed, played with her fan—"as I hear from the director, you have rejected the token of our thanks we proposed to offer you."

"*Yes!*" declared Ulrich sullenly, without softening the roughness of this "yes" by a single word.

"I regret if the offering or the manner of making it has offended you. Herr Berkow"—a slight blush overspread Eugenie's face as she uttered this falsehood—"Herr Berkow certainly intended to express to you personally his thanks and my own, but he was prevented and chose the director to represent him. It would deeply grieve me if you saw in this any ingratitude on our side toward the preserver of our lives. We both know how deeply we are indebted to you, and you could not refuse if I begged you to accept from my hands——"

Ulrich started up. The first words had softened him, but the last spoiled all. His face became white and in reckless passion he exclaimed:

"No more of this, lady! If you offer me a reward, even you, I shall wish I had let the carriage and all within it go to destruction!"

Eugenie started back at this sudden outbreak of that unrestrained savagery which had made Ulrich Hartmann feared throughout the works. Such a tone and glance had never before come near the daughter of Baron Windeg. She replied in an offended tone:

"I would not press my thanks upon you. If the expression of them is so unpleasant to you, I regret having sent for you."

She turned and made a motion as if to leave the room, and this brought Ulrich to his senses. He made a hasty step toward her.

"Gracious lady—I—forgive me! I would not do harm to *you!*"

There lay in the outcry such sudden, passionate remorse that Eugenie paused and gazed at him in great perplexity, as if in his face she sought some clew to the character of this enigmatical being, but the wild entreaty had disarmed her anger.

"Not to *me?*" repeated she. "Is it, then, indifferent to you that you wound others by your rudeness—the director, for instance, and Herr Wilberg?"

"*Yes!*" returned Ulrich sullenly—"as indifferent as they would be toward me. There can be no talk of friendship between the officers and me."

"Can there not?" asked Eugenie in surprise. "I did not know that the relations here between officers and workmen were so unpleasant; and Herr Berkow seems to have no suspicion of it, otherwise he would act as arbitrator between you."

"Herr Berkow," said Ulrich cuttingly, "has for twenty years done everything possible for the works, but nothing for the workmen, and this has gone on so long that we are beginning to take affairs into our own hands; and then—ah, my lady, I quite forgot that you are the wife of his son. Pardon me."

The young woman was silent, almost confounded at this hard, reckless candor. What she now heard

was indeed nothing other than she had now and then incidentally heard of her father-in-law; but the terrible bitterness in the words taught her the whole depth of the gulf which lay between him and his underlings. Whoever complained of Herr Berkow could be sure of the sympathy of his daughter-in-law. She had herself the bitterest proof of this man's utter want of principle, but the wife of his son must not, even by gesture, betray this. She must seem not to have heard the remark or reprove it. She preferred the former.

"And so you will receive no token of recognition from my hands?" she asked, turning quickly from this dangerous subject to the former topic. "Well, then, it only remains for me to express my thanks to the man whose hand rescued me from certain death. Will you also reject this? I thank you, Hartmann!"

She reached him her hand. It was only a few seconds that this hand, white and delicate as a rose-leaf, lay in the rough, toil-hardened fist of the miner, but the light touch seemed to strangely thrill him. All the bitterness vanished from his features, the malignity from his glance; the scornful head, the stiff neck, bowed; and he bent over the lady's hand with an expression of mildness and compliance none of his superiors could boast of ever having seen in Ulrich Hartmann.

"Ah, you are giving audience, Eugenie, and to one of our miners," said Berkow's voice behind them as he at this moment entered with his son.

Eugenie drew back her hand, and Ulrich quickly rose to his full height. It needed only this voice to bring back to his manner its dumb hostility, and this was but increased when Arthur, with a sharpness in strange contrast with his usual languid tone, asked:

"Hartmann, how came *you* here?"

"Hartmann!" repeated Berkow as he caught the name and drew a step nearer. "Ah! so we have here our Sir Agitator, who——"

"Curbed our frightened horses and in so doing received a wound while he saved our lives," interrupted Eugenie calmly but emphatically.

"Ah! is that so?" exclaimed Berkow, embarrassed as much through this reminder as by the very decided tone of his daughter-in-law. "Ah, indeed! I had heard of this already, and the director also told me that you and Arthur had rewarded him. The young man is here, I suppose, to return thanks for his present. Were you satisfied, Hartmann?"

The cloud upon Ulrich's forehead grew threatening, and the reply which trembled on his lips might have had the heaviest consequences for him; but Eugenie stepped nearer her *protégé*, and giving him a warning look touched lightly his arm with her fan. He understood the warning; he looked at her, saw the expression of unconcealed anxiety in her eyes, and spite and hate again sank powerless as he calmly, almost coldly, replied:

"Certainly, Herr Berkow. I am content with my lady's thanks."

"That delights me," returned Berkow curtly. Ulrich turned to Eugenie:

"I may now go, gracious lady?"

She bowed her head in silent acquiescence. She saw only too well with what effort this obstinate man controlled his anger. A nod to the chief and his son—a nod in which haughty restraint was plainly visible—and the young man left the room.

"Well, we must confess, Eugenie, that your *protégé* has not much affability," remarked Berkow sneeringly. "He left without ceremony, without even waiting for permission. But where, indeed, should such people learn manners? Arthur, you seem to regard this Hartmann as an especial curiosity. Have you gazed at him long enough?"

Arthur had indeed kept his glance fixed upon the retreating form, and now gazed at the door which had closed behind him. The young man's brows were contracted, his lips compressed; but at his father's question he turned around.

Berkow, with great urbanity, approached his daughter-in-law.

"I regret, Eugenie, that your ignorance of existing circumstances has allowed you to go too far in your condescension. You could naturally have no suspicion of the *rôle* this fellow plays among his comrades, but he must in no event enter this house, and least of all your parlor, even under the pretense of returning thanks for gifts received."

The young woman had seated herself, but her face wore an expression which made her father-in-

law deem it inadvisable to take his place by her side, as he had at first intended. He remained standing opposite her. She allowed him to admire her only from a distance.

"I see they have told you only half the story. May I ask when you last spoke with the director?"

"This morning; and he told me that he was about to take to Hartmann a sum which I think quite too large. Why, it will be a fortune for such people! But I set no limitations before you and Arthur, if you really believe in this extravagant way of expressing your gratitude."

"And do you not know that the young man has rejected the whole sum!"

"*Re—ject—ed!*" cried Berkow, starting back.

"Possibly because it offended him to be sent a sum of money through a third person, while those he rescued from death did not think it worth their while to offer him a word of thanks. I have tried to atone for the latter incivility, but I could not persuade him to accept the smallest sum. It does not appear as if the director had so 'excellently arranged' this matter."

Arthur bit his lips. He knew to whom these last words were directed, although they had been spoken to his father.

"It seems, then, that you sent for him of your own accord?" he asked.

"Certainly."

"I wish you had not done this!" said Berkow excitedly. "This Hartmann is on all sides rec-

ognized as the revolutionary element among the workmen, and I was about to deal with him with the utmost severity. I now see plainly that too much has not been told me. It is evident that this man rejected the money because in paying it we did not enter into those extravagant formalities his pride demands. Yes, he is capable of all this. I must remind you, Eugenie, that my daughter-in-law must pay regard to certain considerations, even when she would give a proof of her generosity."

Upon Eugenie's haughty lips again lay that scornful expression with which already she had often enough met her father-in-law. The remembrance of that to which he had driven her was certainly not in the least calculated to make her accede to his wishes, and the anger, newly flaming up at this recollection, made her overlook the justice of his demand.

"I regret, Herr Berkow, that other considerations must still have weight with me besides that of being your daughter-in-law," returned she icily. "This was an exceptional case; and you must allow me in all such cases for the future to make my own judgment the sole guide of my actions."

It was again every inch the Baroness Windeg who sent back the plebeian millionaire to his prescribed limits. But angered past endurance, or excited by the wine he had taken at dinner, he did not this time show his usual unlimited respect to his daughter-in-law. He replied excitedly:

"Really! Well, then, I must beg you to remember——"

Further he did not go, for Arthur, who had hitherto remained quietly in the background, now came to his wife's side and said calmly :

"Above all things, I implore you, papa, to let this troublesome affair rest. I have given Eugenie the fullest liberty in all such matters; and I do not wish that any one should seek to restrict her in this."

Berkow looked at his son as if he had not heard aright. He was accustomed to see Arthur allow all events, weighty or trifling, to pass by him with the same passive indifference, and he knew not what to think of this sudden interference.

"You appear to be in a rebellious mood to-day," he said sarcastically. "I think I may as well take flight from this united opposition, especially as I have business matters to attend to. I hope to find you somewhat less quarrelsome to-morrow, Eugenie, and my son rather more tractable than he has been to-day. I wish you both a good-evening."

As with illy repressed rage he left the room, Berkow had no suspicion that by this sudden departure he had thrown the newly married pair into an embarrassment they had not known since the evening of their arrival, namely, that of being left alone together. They had since then met only in the company of strangers or at table in the presence of the servants, and this unexpected *tête-à ttête* was unwelcome to both. Arthur might well feel that he could not at once follow his father without addressing a few words to his wife, but several moments

passed before he could force himself to say a word, and he did not speak until Eugenie said coldly:

"It was not necessary for you to come to my help. I could very well alone have maintained my independence of your father."

"I doubt not in the least your independence," replied Arthur in an equally cool tone, "but I doubt my father's delicacy of feeling in regard to certain things. He was just about to bring to your remembrance some facts which I did not wish you to hear. That was the sole reason of my interference."

The young woman was silent. She leaned back in her chair, while Arthur, who stood at the table, seized the fan lying there, and apparently with the deepest interest studied the arabesques upon it. After another uncomfortable silence he said at length:

"As to that Hartmann affair, I wonder at your self-delusion. Such circles and such persons must, of all others, be your antipathy."

Eugenie's large eyes opened wide, and in their dark depths lay a world of contempt.

"I have an antipathy to weakness and vulgarity," she said, "but to nothing else. I respect every one who fully and energetically maintains his place in life, whether upon the heights or down in the valleys."

There was a hard tone in her voice. Arthur's hand still played carelessly with the fan, but there was something nervous in this play and in the

tremor of his lips. He had started involuntarily when she spoke of weakness and vulgarity, although his face preserved through all the most perfect indifference.

"A very exalted sentiment," he said negligently. "Only I fear you would suffer some disillusion should you form nearer acquaintance with that wild, rough creature who rules down there in the valley."

"But this young miner is no common individual," declared Eugenie very decidedly. "He may be wild and uncontrollable, as a man of such native strength is in danger of becoming under untoward circumstances; but rough I have not found him."

Unconsciously to herself, her voice was somewhat excited. Arthur's eyes had again that half-smothered fire in their glance as he fixed them upon her.

"You seem to have won strange power over this wild, uncontrollable strong man," he said. "He was about to attack my father; you only touched his arm with your fan, and the raging lion became gentle as a lamb." The young man's slender white hand here shut the fan so violently that the costly toy was in serious danger, while he mockingly went on: "And how chivalric was his manner as he bowed over your hand! If we had not come I believe he would, like a true cavalier, have begged to kiss that hand."

With a passionate gesture Eugenie rose.

"I fear, Arthur," she said, "that this man will ere long give you and your father something more than

sport; and I do not know but your father would do well to drive his underlings into a yet fiercer opposition. The consequences might fall back on himself."

Her husband looked at her with a quiet, unmoved glance as she thus stood before him. To him this rustling silk dress, this fleecy cloud of lace strewn with roses, this glitter of pearls was nothing new, any more than the beautiful blond head with the proud features and the dark eyes now flashing with anger. Perhaps the lively partisanship she showed for her *protégé* was new to him. He still retained the careless, mocking tone he had maintained during the whole interview, but behind this lay concealed something like raging passion; and the fan met with sad misfortune in his hands. The delicate, artistically carved ivory was broken as he hurled rather than threw it on the floor.

"Did our 'deliverer' give you a lecture upon social matters? I regret to have missed the lecture. But at any rate this Hartmann is a curiosity. He has brought about what no other could possibly have done: he has caused an animated conversation between us. But the interest in this theme is now quite exhausted. Don't you think so?"

The entrance of a servant with a message ended the conversation. Arthur at once availed himself of this excuse to withdraw; he parted from his wife coldly and ceremoniously, as was their usual custom. Hardly had Eugenie found herself alone before, in an excitement she could not repress, she

began to pace up and down the room. She was enraged at the coldness and heartlessness they showed toward Ulrich's deed, but it was not this alone which made her step so hasty and drove the flush of anger to her cheeks.

Why could she never meet her husband with that perfect contempt it was so easy to show to his father? Was he any more worthy of respect? There lay in his boundless indolence something which parried every thrust and frequently gave him a secret superiority to the proud, passionate woman who only too often allowed temper to gain the mastery. It had been present in the deep humiliation of that evening when, with such overwhelming frankness, she had revealed to him the whole truth; it had been present in that heaviest offense of to-day when she had shown him how falsely he had dealt with his and her rescuer: and both times he had met her in a manner which proved that he could not speedily be killed or annihilated by contempt.

She would not acknowledge this; she would not confess it even to herself—how it wounded her that since that first explanation he had not made the slightest effort to dissolve the truly icy relations between them by one single word. Certainly she would have repelled every such effort with the disdainful pride always at her command; but that he never gave her the opportunity to do this, that he never took the trouble to go a step beyond what etiquette demanded—that enraged her against her

will. Eugenie was a woman strong in both her loves and hates, and her aversion to her husband was decided even before she gave him her hand; but, like his father, he did not permit her to look down upon him from an unapproachable height. The young wife dimly felt this, although she could give no reason why he compelled this sentiment in her.

As Arthur was passing through the corridor he met the director and the chief engineer, who both, having been detained for an interview with Berkow, were about to leave the house. Young Berkow suddenly paused.

"May I ask, Herr Director," he said sharply, "why Hartmann's refusal to accept that money was first communicated to my wife, while I did not hear a word of it?"

"Good heavens!" replied the director, somewhat embarrassed. "I did not know you thought it of any consequence, Herr Berkow. You so emphatically declined all personal interference in the matter, while her ladyship showed such interest, that I believed myself bound——"

"Ah!" interrupted Arthur, while there was a slight nervous quiver around his lips. "Well, her ladyship's wishes must certainly be followed; but still I must beg you in such business matters"—he emphasized that word *business*—"not so fully to ignore me as in this case. And I should wish in future to be first informed. I request this most decidedly."

With these words he left the nonplussed officers and went to his chamber. The director looked at his colleague.

"What say you to that?"

The chief engineer laughed.

"Signs and wonders are frequent in our day. Herr Arthur begin to concern himself about business affairs! Herr Arthur demand anything emphatically! This certainly has not happened before in my remembrance."

"But this is not at all a matter of business," said the director excitedly. "It is a purely private affair, and I can just imagine the whole story. Hartmann must have treated her ladyship in his own peculiarly amiable way. Just imagine him in a lady's *salon!* He probably said to her face what he said to me this morning, and her ladyship is angry, the young heir also. I shall doubtless hear some polite phrases from old Berkow because I allowed the audience."

"Well, it is the first time Herr Arthur has been angry at anything that concerned his young wife," said the chief engineer as they went together down the steps. "I find that the glacial atmosphere which prevails in this marriage begins to pervade the entire surroundings. One perceives the ice region as soon as he comes near them. Do you not think so?"

"I think that Frau Berkow to-day looked enchantingly beautiful. She was certainly very

cold and very aristocratic, but entirely, bewilderingly beautiful!"

The chief engineer made a comic gesture of terror.

"Heaven help us! You are falling into Wilberg's style. It is a good thing for you that you are past fifty. Apropos of Wilberg, he already swims in a sea of romantic adoration, but I do not believe that this or his inevitable verses will awaken any great jealousy in Herr Arthur's breast. He seems as little inclined to bestow admiration on his beautiful wife as she to receive it. Amid all these daily *convenances*, I cannot help feeling that things will not take their usual course. I suspect that under this ice lies buried something like a Vulcan, who one of these fine days will break loose with thunder and lightning, to give us a bit of an earthquake and a worldly overthrow."

"Then there would be a flavor of poesy in 'this barren steppe of commonplace life,' as Wilberg would say, provided the eruption only spared him and his guitar. But here we are below. Pleasant dreams to you, my friend. *Glück auf.*"

CHAPTER VI.

More than four weeks had passed since the bridal festivities on the Berkow estates. Herr Berkow, having found little of his anticipated pleasure in the very early visit which he had designed as an agreeable surprise to his children, had after a few days returned to the Residence, where urgent business affairs demanded his attention. Now he was expected for a longer sojourn.

Meantime there had been no change in the life of the young married pair, save that, if possible, it had become more estranged, colder, and more aristocratic than at first. Both seemed to long for the end of the "honeymoon" which they had undertaken to pass in this country solitude. But here they must remain until summer made possible a longer journey, from which they were to return to their fixed abode, the Residence. Herr Berkow had already arranged the future household, which was to be on a scale of the most prodigal expenditure.

His day's work had ended early and Ulrich Hartmann was returning to his father's house, but he was forced to moderate his usually rapid step, for Herr Wilberg was at his side. This young gentle-

man had literally taken him prisoner and would not let him go. It was a strange thing to see one of the officers in such confidential relations with the miner Hartmann, and stranger yet was the fact that the advances all came from Herr Wilberg. But there was something more in this than the well-known law that opposites attract. The chief engineer had no presentiment as to what his idle jest would lead. His sportive hint that Hartmann and his heroic deed would form the subject for a ballad just in Wilberg's style had fallen upon an all too susceptible soil. Wilberg had seriously decided to work up this material into a poem; only he was in doubt whether the proposed masterpiece should be ballad, epic, or drama. He never for a moment doubted that the varied excellences of these three modes of poetic art were all united in his own genius.

Unhappily for Ulrich, his energetic and courageous deed had fully impressed this rising poet with the idea that he was especially designed for a tragic hero, and Wilberg followed him around like his shadow, so as to study so interesting a character. When our poet learned that Ulrich had haughtily refused the proffered recompense, the romantic nimbus before his eyes grew to a radiance nothing could dispel—not even the rudeness of the idolized hero nor the cutting remarks of the officers, who were displeased with an intimacy with one so unfitted for their higher circle.

Ulrich showed little inclination for being thus

made a "study" of by the would-be poet: often enough, and most impatiently, he sought to shake off the intrusive companionship, as one would shake off a troublesome fly, but with small success. Wilberg was determined to see a hero in him—a rough, wild, untamable hero, to be sure; but the more unamiable he grew the more delighted was our poet at this clear development of the character he sought to depict, and studied him with all the more ardor. The young master-miner at length, with a shrug of the shoulders, yielded to the inevitable. At last, each becoming wonted to the other's society, a sort of intimacy really sprang up between them; in which, however, there was little of respect on Hartmann's side.

The wind blew rather cold from the north. Herr Wilberg carefully buttoned his *paletôt* and drew his thick woolen shawl around him, while he said with a sigh:

"You are a happy man, Hartmann, with your giant nature and your giant health. You go up and down the mines in heat and cold; you stand unprotected in the biting wind; while I must carefully guard myself from every change of temperature. And I am so nervous, so sensitive, so excitable! That comes from the intellect being all too much for the body. Yes, Hartmann, it arises from a preponderance of thought and feeling."

"I think it comes, Herr Wilberg, from your eternal tea-drinking," replied Ulrich, with a half-sympathetic glance upon the little sickly officer.

"If every morning and evening you gulp down that thin, hot stuff, you can never be strong."

Wilberg, with a consciousness of infinite mental superiority, gazed up to his adviser.

"You do not understand, Hartmann," he said. "I could not possibly endure your rough diet: my constitution is not fitted for it. And then tea is a highly æsthetic drink. It enlivens me; it inspires me when the commonplace work of the day is ended; and in the silent evening hours the Muses draw nigh——"

"You mean when you make verses?" interrupted Ulrich dryly. "And you need tea for that? Yes, I should think so."

Happily just at that moment a rhyme passed through the head of the insulted poet, and he must hold it fast: so he scarce heard Ulrich's words. The next moment he said good-humoredly:

"I have a request to make of you, Hartmann. Yes, an entreaty, a demand," he added, mounting to a regular climax. "You must grant it at any price. You are in possession of an object which to you is entirely worthless and which would make me the happiest of mortals. You must yield it to me."

"What must I yield to you?" asked Ulrich, who, as usual when Wilberg spoke, had only half-listened.

Herr Wilberg blushed, sighed, glanced at the ground, sighed a second time, and then thought proper to explain.

"You remember the day when you saved her ladyship's life? Ah, Hartmann! it is an eternal shame that you have no sensibility for the poetry of that situation. If *I* had only been in your place! But enough of that. Our lady offered you her own handkerchief to stay the blood of your wound. You kept it in your hand because help at once came from another source. My God! you cannot possibly have forgotten such an occurrence."

"Well, what about the handkerchief?" asked Ulrich, all at once aroused to attention.

"I wish to possess it," murmured Wilberg, casting down his eyes with a melancholy air. "Demand from me whatever you will, but give me this dear *souvenir* of a woman I adore."

"*You!*" cried Ulrich in a tone which made his companion recoil and gaze anxiously around to see if any one was near.

"Do not scream so, Hartmann! You have no need to be horrified because I adore the wife of our future chief. It is something entirely different from the common acceptation of *love;* that is—ah! but you certainly do not know what Platonic love means."

"*No!*" returned the young miner curtly, hastening his pace and evidently determined to break off the conversation.

"*You* could not possibly understand that," declared Herr Wilberg with infinite self-satisfaction, "for you never could or would soar to that exalted purity of feeling of which only the highest culture

is capable; of feeling which, without any hope—ay, without even a wish—contents itself with a mute, blessed, distant adoration. Otherwise what think you a man could do who loved a woman belonging to another?"

"One must conquer this love," said Ulrich grimly, "or——"

"Or what?"

"Kill his rival."

Herr Wilberg with wonderful celerity retreated to the other side of the road, where he paused in horror.

"What barbarity! With murder, with the death-blow, would you attest your love? You are a terrible man, Hartmann! And you say this with a tone, with a glance— Our gracious lady was quite right when she called you an untamable nature, who——"

"Did she call me that?" interrupted Hartmann excitedly.

"'A wild, untamable nature!' those were her words—a highly intellectual expression and perfectly appropriate in this case. Hartmann"—the young officer slowly and timidly ventured nearer—"Hartmann, I might forgive you all this, all you have just said; but what I never can forgive is your detestable behavior to our lady. Have you, then, no eye for that grace and beauty which disarm even the roughest of your comrades that you shun her glance as if it would bring you calamity? When you see her carriage in the distance you turn

away; when she drives by you retreat into the first house that offers. You make a daily circuit around the director's house when you go to your daily work, for fear you may meet her at the park gate and be obliged to salute her. O this obstinate class-hatred which spares not even women! I repeat it, you are a terrible man!"

Ulrich was silent. Contrary to his habit, he let this reproach pass without a syllable in reply, thus strengthening Herr Wilberg in the happy illusion that his words at last were of some avail. Greatly encouraged, he began anew.

"And now, returning to the main object—the handkerchief——"

"How do I know where the thing is?" interrupted Ulrich roughly. "It may be lost; or Martha may have returned it. I know nothing about it."

Wilberg was almost beside himself at such indifference to a treasure in his eyes so infinitely precious, when, on glancing up, he chanced to see Martha coming out of the overseer's house, which they had meantime approached. Like a sparrow-hawk the young officer shot to her side and began to question her about the handkerchief—whether it had been given back or whether it might not possibly be somewhere around the house. At first the girl did not seem to understand him, but as she comprehended a shadow passed over her face.

"The handkerchief is still here," she said. "I thought one day I would return it, so I took it and washed out the blood; but Ulrich stormed like a

savage because I had meddled with the handkerchief. He has it now in his chest."

"Ah! and this was only an excuse to deny me the desired object!" cried Wilberg with a reproachful glance at Ulrich, who had listened with bitter vexation and now scornfully said:

"You may as well be content, Herr Wilberg. The handkerchief you cannot have."

"And why not, may I ask?"

"Because I shall keep it," replied Ulrich dryly.

"But, Hartmann——"

"When I once say 'no' I keep my word. You know that, Herr Wilberg."

Wilberg raised eyes and hands to heaven, as if he would call upon the celestial powers to witness these repeated insults; but all at once his arms sank powerless and he gave a sudden start as a voice behind Martha said:

"Can you tell me, dear child— Ah, Herr Wilberg, do I intrude?"

Herr Wilberg stood speechless, as much from despair as from ecstasy at this unexpected meeting; for he was quite overcome by the annihilating consciousness that, in a blue *paletôt* and a green shawl, with a nose reddened by the sharp winds, he must now appear before this high-born lady, who had hitherto seen him only in the most elegant society dress. He knew how very unbecoming to him was this array of colors, and only an hour ago he had made a solemn vow to exchange the green shawl for one more suitable; but now untoward destiny

had brought him before the very eyes of his ideal. Herr Wilberg wished himself in the lowest shaft of the mines, but still in his embarrassment he had sense enough to be vexed with Ulrich, who, in clothes all covered with the dust of his work, stood right before the lady motionless as a statue.

Eugenie had been walking along the road leading past the overseer's house, and had, unremarked, entered the garden, where she saw only Martha. She had received no answer to her half-finished question, for both men were silent until Martha said:

"We were speaking of the handkerchief you gave us for a bandage, and which has not yet been returned."

"Ah, yes! my handkerchief," replied Eugenie indifferently. "I had entirely forgotten it; but if you have been so careful about keeping it, child, you can hand it back to me."

"It is Ulrich who has it, not I," said Martha, her searching glance resting upon Ulrich; and Eugenie now gazed somewhat surprised upon the young man, who had not even greeted her.

"Ah! you, Hartmann? Will you then return it to me?"

Herr Wilberg had new occasion to be vexed at Ulrich's "detestable behavior," for he stood there immovable, his brow contracted, his lips compressed, with an expression of that dogged obstinacy with which he had armed himself upon his entrance into the lady's *salon.* It was evident that he must really fight down his hatred against the

young wife of his chief, but this time his better nature conquered.

Herr Wilberg remarked how the first tones of his voice trembled with shame at his behavior, how the glowing red mounted to his forehead, how the hostility and obstinacy of his manner vanished. The lecture he had just given must be having its effect: how else could this iron-headed Hartmann, over whom persuasion and coercion were alike without avail, have yielded a dumb obedience to that one request as now, when he went into the house and after the lapse of a few minutes came back with the handkerchief in his hand?

"Here, your ladyship."

Eugenie indifferently took the handkerchief, upon which she did not seem to set the slightest value.

"And now, Herr Wilberg, as you are here you can give me some information. I came this way for the first time, and find the bridge leading to the park closed by a gate. Can it not be opened? And must I take the circuitous route back through the entire works?"

She pointed to the bridge only a few steps distant, which led to the park on this side and which was protected by an iron gate. Herr Wilberg was in despair. The bridge was closed. They wished to make it impassable to the workmen who had their dwellings on this side, but the gardener had the key. Wilberg would run, yes, fly, to fetch it if her ladyship could wait so long.

"Oh, no, indeed!" replied Eugenie a little impa-

tiently. "Then you would have twice to go the whole distance I seek to shun; and the waiting would be rather too long. I prefer to go around."

Wilberg would not consent to this. He begged and entreated the lady to grant him the pleasure of this knightly service, but in the midst of his well-arranged speech a loud crash was heard.

Ulrich had approached the gate and grasped it with both hands. He shook the iron bars with such violence that the fastenings groaned. But as they did not yield at once an angry flush passed over the miner's face; an energetic kick broke bolt and lock; the gate flew open.

"For God's sake, Hartmann, what are you doing?" cried Wilberg in affright. "What will Herr Berkow say?"

Ulrich gave him no answer. He opened wide the gate and turning around coolly said:

"The way is open, your ladyship."

Eugenie did not look so thunder-struck as the young officer. She laughed as she entered the way so violently opened.

"I thank you, Hartmann," she said; "and as for the spoiled lock, Herr Wilberg, give yourself no uneasiness. I will be answerable for that. But as the gate is open will you not also take the short way leading through the park?"

What a condescension! Herr Wilberg did not hasten: he rushed, he flew to the lady's side, and began to rack his brains for some topic of conversation, interesting and intellectual as possible. But

he was forced to content himself with something very prosaic, for Eugenie turned back her head with that same earnest, thoughtful glance which had once before vainly sought to penetrate the contradictory, enigmatical ways of this man.

"This Hartmann has a real Berserker strength and a Berserker violence. Without hesitation he shivered lock and bolt, only——"

"Only to open a more convenient path for me," added Eugenie in a slightly ironical tone as she glanced at her companion. "You would not have been guilty of so stormy a piece of politeness, Herr Wilberg?"

Herr Wilberg protested warmly against such a supposition. Her ladyship surely could not believe that he would so violently assail the property of another, and in her very presence! But her ladyship heard this assurance with an absent air, and during the whole walk Herr Wilberg, with all his efforts, could not once fetter her attention.

Hartmann had again closed the gate and was slowly turning back to the house, but before the door he paused and gazed steadily at the park in whose alleys the two figures had vanished.

"I thought when you once said 'no,' Ulrich, no it remained."

The young man turned hastily around and his sullen glance fell upon Martha, who stood at his side.

"What is that to you?" he asked roughly.

"To me? Nothing. Do not look so cross, Ulrich,

You are angry with me because I reminded our lady of her handkerchief; but it belonged to her. And what would you do with that delicate white thing? You could not even touch it when you came home from work, and you had really gazed at it enough."

There lay a light, but still unconcealed tone of irony in the girl's voice, and Ulrich must have felt this, for he said hastily:

"Leave me alone with your jeers and your spying. I tell you, Martha——"

"Well, well! what is the matter outside there? Are you quarreling?" interrupted the overseer, who now stood in the doorway.

Ulrich turned sullenly away. He seemed to have no desire to continue the quarrel, while Martha, without answering her uncle, hurried past him into the house.

"What is the matter with the girl?" asked the overseer; "and what is it between you both? Have you again been talking roughly to her?"

Ulrich, with a scornful gesture, threw himself on a bench.

"I am not going to be dictated to as to what I shall do, and least of all by Martha."

"She surely would do nothing to grieve *you*," said the father calmly.

"And why not *me?*"

The overseer looked steadily at his son and said:

"Have you no eyes in your head or will you not see it? But you really have never troubled your-

self about this girl, and it is no wonder you do not at all understand her."

"What am I to understand, then?" asked the young man, all at once growing attentive.

The father took the pipe out of his mouth and blew forth a cloud of smoke.

"That Martha loves you," he replied.

"Martha! Me!"

"I really believe he did not know it before!" said the overseer in unfeigned astonishment. "And his old father must first tell it to him! But that comes from having one's nose forever stuck in things that bewilder the brain. God knows, Ulrich, that it is time you had done with all this stuff and nonsense and took a sensible wife who would bring you to better thoughts."

Ulrich glanced over to the park, and his eyes again took on their former sullen, gloomy expression.

"You are right, father," he said slowly: "it *is* time!"

The old man almost let fall his pipe from astonishment.

"Boy, this is the first reasonable word I have heard from you. Are you really coming to your senses? Yes, indeed it is time! You could long ago have supported a wife; and, far and near, you will find no prettier, better, or more sensible girl than Martha. I need not tell you how glad I should be to have you marry. Now think the matter over."

The young man had sprung from his seat and was now hastily walking up and down.

"Perhaps it would be best. There must be an end to all this—that I have again seen to-day—and the sooner the better."

"What is it? With what must an end be made?"

"Nothing, father, nothing! But you are quite right. If I only had a wife I should know where I and my thoughts belonged. Do you really believe that Martha likes me?"

"Go and ask her yourself," cried the overseer, laughing. "Do you think the girl would still be in our house if she cared to marry another? She certainly has wooers a plenty. I know enough who want her; and Lorenz for a year and a day has wooed in vain. He has won no *yes;* but you, if you will, can receive one this very day."

Ulrich listened intently, but in spite of this flattering assertion his face showed little happiness or content. He looked as if he was forcing down a rebellious something that would not let him come to a decision, and there was a wildness and convulsiveness in the sudden resolution with which he now said:

"Very well, if you think I shall not receive a refusal I will speak with Martha."

"Must it be right away?" asked the overseer, perplexed. "Ulrich, people do not woo in this headlong manner, especially if a quarter of an hour before they have had no idea of it. First reflect upon the matter."

Ulrich made an impatient gesture.

"Why this long delay? I must know where I stand. Let me go in, father!"

The father shook his head; but he had too much fear lest his son might waver in this sudden resolution to place any serious obstacle in his way. In his joy of heart, it troubled him little that this union for which he had so ardently longed was to be brought about in a somewhat unusual way, so he concluded to remain outside and let the young people arrange matters undisturbed; for he knew Ulrich well enough to be aware that any untimely interference on his part might spoil all.

The young man meantime, as if he would not allow himself a moment for reflection, strode quickly through the hall and opened the door of the sitting-room, where Martha was. Martha sat at a table, the hands usually so busy idly folded on her lap. She did not glance up as he entered, and seemed not to notice that he stood close by her chair, but he saw that she had been weeping.

"Does it still grieve you, Martha, my just speaking so unkindly? I am sorry. Why do you look at me in that way?"

"Because it is the first time you have been grieved or sorry on my account. You have never before asked whether I was glad or sorrowful. Let it be so to-day."

The tone sounded cold and repellent enough, but Ulrich did not allow himself to be frightened away. His father's revelation must have had a powerful

effect upon his stormy nature, for his voice was unusually mild as he answered:

"I know that I am a greal deal worse than the others, but I cannot change at once. You must take me just as I am, and perhaps you will make something better out of me."

The girl had at his first tone glanced up surprised. Something unusual must have been in his face, for she made a hasty movement to rise. Ulrich held her fast.

"Remain, here, Martha! I have to speak with you. I want to ask you—well, I cannot make many words, and between us that is unnecessary. We are brother and sister's children; we have for years lived together in the same house. You best know what you have to expect from me, and you know that I have always liked you in spite of all our quarrels. Will you be my wife, Martha?"

The wooing came so hastily, so rashly, so stormily, and was so like the nature of the wooer! He drew a deep breath, as if with the decisive words a burden had rolled from his heart. Martha still sat unmovable before him, a deep pallor on her usually blooming face; but she did not waver or delay an instant before giving her answer, a low, half-stifled "*No.*"

Ulrich could not believe his senses.

"Will you not?" he asked.

"No, Ulrich, I will not!" repeated Martha in a hollow but decided voice.

The young man sprang angrily to his feet.

"Well, then, I might have saved myself this long speech," he said. "My father erred and I also. Do not be offended, Martha."

Bitterly wounded in his manly pride, he was about to leave the room, when a glance from Martha forced him to remain. She had risen and with both hands grasped the arm of her chair, as if she must have this support. No word of reply or of explanation passed her lips, but those lips trembled so violently and in her pale face was such unutterable woe that Ulrich felt his father must be right in spite of all.

"I believed you love me, Martha," he said in a slightly reproachful tone.

With a passionate gesture she turned from him and buried her face in her hands, but he heard a sound, which was as of sobs, with difficulty repressed.

"I might have reflected that I am too wild, too rough for you. You are afraid of me: you think that after marriage it might be even worse. In Lorenz you certainly will find a better man, who will do in all things as you wish."

The girl shook her head and slowly turned her face to his.

"I do not fear you," she said, "even if you are rough and violent. I know you cannot be otherwise. I would have taken you just as you are, perhaps gladly, but I will not accept you as you now are, as you have been since the day her ladyship came."

Ulrich trembled. A flaming red shot up into his face. He knew he ought to fly into a passion, to angrily command her silence, but not a syllable broke from his lips.

"Uncle thinks that you care for no one, that you have other thoughts in your head," continued Martha, still more excitedly. "Ah, yes! *quite* other thoughts! You have never cared for me, and now you come all at once and ask me to be your wife! You need some one who will drive away those thoughts; do you not, Ulrich? And for this, the first one at hand will do; for this I am good enough. But I am not deceived. If I loved you more than all the world and if it would cost me my life to let you go—rather Lorenz, rather any other *now*, than you!"

It was an outbreak of fearful passion in this usually quiet girl. In this storm which had broken loose within her Ulrich might have learned how strong a hold he had upon her heart. Perhaps he did learn this, but it did not remove the cloud from his forehead nor that flaming glow from his face, which grew deeper at every word. He had no reply to make, and as she now broke into a loud weeping he stood by her dumb, without one consoling or pacifying word. Some minutes passed thus. Martha sat with arms folded over the table and her head resting on them. No sound was heard save her low, convulsive sobs and the ticking of the clock on the wall. At last Ulrich bent down to her. His voice was no longer rough and passionate, but yet

it was not mild. There lay in it only a hollow tone of sympathy.

"Never mind, Martha! I thought things would be better if you helped me. Perhaps they would only have been worse, and you are quite right to venture nothing for my sake. Let all remain as it was with us both."

He went without further adieu, but at the threshold he paused and looked back at Martha. She did not raise her head and he passed quickly out.

"Well?" asked the overseer eagerly, coming to meet his son. "*Well?*" he repeated more slowly, for Ulrich's face did not look like that of a successful wooer.

"It was of no use, father," said Ulrich gloomily. "Martha would not have me."

"Would not have you? Not you?" cried the old man in a tone as if the most incredible thing in the world had just been told him.

"No! And now don't torment us with questions and speeches about it. She very well knows why she has refused me, and so do I: a third person need know nothing about it. And now let me go, father. I must go!"

Hastily, as if he would shun all explanation, the young man walked away. The overseer seized his pipe with both hands, and in his vexation was almost tempted to dash it on the floor.

"It's precious little one understands about these young women," he growled. "I thought the girl loved him, and now she sends him off with a *no.*

And he—I really did not think the lad would lay it so to heart. He looked quite confounded and was off like a madman. For my life I cannot account for it, much as I know of him and just as little of Martha."

The overseer began hastily to pace up and down the garden, until his anger gave place to a more resigned mood. What could he do about it? The two could not be forced to marry, and if they would not it was of no use to rack one's brains over the question *why* they would not. With a deep sigh the old man bade farewell to the darling plan of his life.

While he yet stood in troubled thought by the garden gate he saw young Herr Berkow coming along the road which led past his little house to the rear of the park. Arthur seemed better acquainted with the way than his wife had been. He took a key from his pocket, which fitted the lock Ulrich had forced open. The overseer bowed low and respectfully as the young heir passed, but he, with his usual indifference, scarce gave back a side glance, and with a haughty, careless nod was passing on. The old man's features quivered. He stood with cap in hand and gazed after the future chief with a silent, mournful glance which seemed to say: "And even you have become so!"

Whether Arthur remarked this glance or whether it occurred to him now for the first time that the old friend and companion of his childhood years stood before him he paused suddenly.

"Ah, is it you, Hartmann? How do you do?"

In his lazy, indifferent way he put forth his hand and seemed somewhat surprised that it was not grasped at once, but the overseer had not for years indulged in such a familiarity. He hesitated; and as he at last took the proffered hand it was timidly and carefully, as if he feared that delicate white hand might suffer harm in his own hard fist.

"I thank you, I am well, Herr Arthur—I beg your pardon, I should say Herr Berkow."

"Call me by the old name," said the young man kindly. "You are more accustomed to it and I like it better than the other. Are you content, Hartmann?"

"Yes, thank God! Herr Arthur, I have what I need. There must be a bit of care and anxiety in every house, and I am having some just now with my children; but that is neither here nor there."

The overseer, with surprise, saw that the young gentleman drew nearer and rested both arms upon the wooden gate, as if he intended a longer conversation.

"With your children? I thought you had but one—a son."

"You are quite right—my Ulrich; but I have a sister's child also in the house—Martha Ewers."

"And does she cause you anxiety?"

"God forbid!" cried the overseer hastily. "The girl is noble and good, and I had thought she and Ulrich would marry and——"

"And Ulrich will not?" interrupted Arthur with a quick upward glance from his heavy eyes.

The old man shrugged his shoulders.

"I do not know whether he really would not or began his wooing in the wrong way. Enough, all is over between them; and this was my last hope, that he would marry a sensible woman who would set his head right."

It was strange that the old miner's simple and uninteresting family recitals did not seem to weary the young gentleman. He did not once yawn as usual, and his face showed a sort of interest as he asked:

"Is his head not right now?"

The old man gave the questioner a timid side glance; then his eyes fell to the ground.

"Herr Arthur," he said, "I am not the first to tell you of this. You must already have heard enough about Ulrich."

"Yes, I remember: my father spoke to me of him. Your son is not on good terms with the officers."

The father sighed.

"I cannot change matters," he said. "Ulrich obeys me no longer: in fact, he never has obeyed me. He must always have his own way, let who will oppose. I have allowed this lad to learn a great deal more than other lads of his station, perhaps more than was good for him. I thought he would rise the more rapidly, and he is now master-miner and might be an overseer; but all this trouble comes from his learning. He bothers his head about all sorts of histories, wants to know every-

thing, sits the whole night at his books, and is all in all with his comrades. How he got to be first everywhere I do not know; but when he was a little fellow he had the other lads all under his control, and it is now worse than ever. What he says they believe blindly: where he stands they all stand together. If he should lead them into a living hell they would follow. But this is not as it should be, especially on the works."

"And why not?" asked Arthur, while, as if in deep thought, he drew figures with the key upon the wooden gate.

"Because the people here are too badly off already," burst out the overseer. "Do not be angry, Herr Arthur, because I say it to your face; for it is even so. I cannot complain. I have always had more than my deserts, because your dead mother liked my wife; but the others! It is work and anxiety day in and day out, and then scarce the barest necessaries for wife and child. It is, God knows, bitter bread and sour bread we earn; but we must all work, and the most are heartily glad to work if they can have only their rights as upon the other mines. But here they are oppressed. Every penny possible is taken from their scanty earnings, and things are so bad in the mines that every man on going down says his prayers, because he thinks he is likely never to come up again. But there is never any money for repairs, and if any of the miners is in need and sickness there is no money to help him; and still we must see how hundreds of

thousands are sent away to the Residence, so that——"

The old man suddenly paused and in mortal terror laid his hand upon his gossiping mouth. He had spoken in such excitement that he had quite forgotten who stood before him. The deep flush which at these last words had passed over the young man's face first recalled him to remembrance.

"Well?" asked Arthur as he became silent. "Speak on, Hartmann; you see that I listen."

"Heaven help me!" whispered the old man in the greatest embarrassment. "I did not think—I had entirely forgotten——"

"Who had used up the hundred thousands? You need make no excuses. Speak out freely whatever you have to say. Or do you believe that I will betray you to my father?"

"Oh, no! you certainly would not do that!" replied the overseer. "You are not like your father. An indiscreet word to him would cost a man his place. Well, I was only going to say that all this causes bad blood among the workmen. Herr Arthur"—with a timid, supplicating air the old man drew a step nearer—"if you would only concern yourself about these matters. You are the son of the proprietor and some day will inherit all. No one can be so nearly concerned as you."

"*I?*" asked Arthur with a bitterness which happily quite escaped his unsuspecting listener. "I understand none of the wants and necessities of the works. All this has been kept entirely remote from me."

The old man shook his head sadly.

"God knows there is not much to understand. For this you need not study the machinery or the mines; you need only to see and listen to the workmen as you now listen to me; but really no one does that. Whoever complains is sent away for 'insubordination'—so it is called; and the poor miner, dismissed for this cause, finds another place only with great difficulty. Herr Arthur, I tell you there is bitter misery here, and this it is which Ulrich cannot bear to see. It corrodes his heart, and though I am all the time talking and preaching against his ideas, I know that in many respects he is right. Things cannot go on in this way. But Ulrich's plans for righting matters are godless and wicked; they will yet bring him and us all to ruin. Herr Arthur"—sorrowful tears stood in the old man's eyes as he now unhesitatingly took the hand of the young heir—"Herr Arthur, in God's name I implore you take this matter in hand. There is danger for you, for your father, and for us all. There is rebellion everywhere among the miners; but if it once breaks loose here among us, then Heaven help us, for it will be terrible!"

During this whole speech Arthur had stood silent, with a far-off, vacant gaze. Now he lifted his eyes and fixed them sadly on the speaker.

"I will mention this to my father," he said slowly. "You may rely upon that, Hartmann."

The overseer let fall the hand he held and started back. Now that he had laid bare his whole heart,

he certainly expected some other result than this barren promise. Arthur, with a somewhat offended air, turned to go.

"One thing more, Hartmann," he said. "Your son saved my life and may well feel wounded in having received no word of thanks from me. I place little worth upon life, and possibly I may have undervalued the service rendered me; but I should not have been guilty of such neglect if"—the young heir frowned and his voice assumed a sharp tone—"if your Ulrich had not been just the man he is. I have no desire to have my acknowledgments repulsed, as my late proffered reward was. But yet I would not be deemed ungrateful. Say to him that I allow you to present him my thanks. As for the rest, I will take counsel with my father. Good-day!"

He took the way to the park. The overseer gazed mournfully after him and with a deep-drawn sigh said softly to himself:

"God grant his intercession with his father may help us! but I do not believe it will."

CHAPTER VII.

Up at the Berkow place the family equipage was brought out of the coach-house and the coachman set about harnessing the horses.

"This is something entirely new," he said to the servant who had brought the order to harness. "The young master and mistress going to drive out together? This day must be marked red in the calendar."

The servant laughed.

"Yes, and little of a pleasure drive it will be; but it can't be avoided. Return visits are to be made in town to those aristocratic people who were lately here to dine, and it wouldn't look well for the husband and wife each to go alone. They'd rather, I've no doubt."

"A curious couple," said the coachman, shaking his head. "And they call this being married! God deliver everybody from such a marriage!"

A quarter of an hour later the coach, with Arthur Berkow and his wife, rolled along the road leading to the town. The weather had been tolerable during the forenoon, but was now quite threatening. The sky was overcast, the wind, increased to a gale, drove the gray clouds before it, and every

now and then a shower fell upon the already rain-soaked earth.

It had been an exceedingly rough, stormy spring —one of those springs to make city people shun a sojourn in the country. Although May had come, the trees of the Berkow park were bare and leafless; the sharp winds and cold gusts of rain, to the despair of the gardener, had destroyed the flowery array he had so carefully nursed on the terrace and in the garden-beds, and pitilessly rent out and killed every blossom that dared expand in the open air. The bottomless roads, the rain-soaked forests, made every carriage-drive as unpleasant as dangerous an undertaking.

Day after day of wind and rain, a gray, overcast sky, mist-wreathed hills and valleys, and worse than all these a dreary, comfortless household, where no sunbeam penetrated the fog which closed thicker and thicker around, where every blossom that sought to open was frozen in that icy atmosphere of contempt and hatred, where a husband and wife regarded as a kind of torture, which each would escape as soon as possible, that undisturbed dual life which newly married people are wont to consider their highest happiness. All this might well explain the deep pallor on the young wife's face; the expression of pain around the mouth which all her self-control could not efface; the somber, melancholy glance with which she surveyed the rainy landscape.

She had imposed more upon her strength than it

could bear. In that first transport of courage and filial love the sacrifice had been cheerfully made, but it was the hours and days after the sacrifice, it was this passive submission to the self-imposed destiny, which demanded the real courage, the full strength of will; and much as Eugenie possessed of both, it was only too evident how painfully this "afterward" oppressed her.

Her husband, who reclined in the further corner of the coach, so far removed that the folds of her silk dress scarce touched his cloak, seemed none the more cheerfully to endure his destiny. His face had, indeed, always been as pale, his eyes always as heavy, his manner always unsympathetic as now; but there was in his features an expression Eugenie had never seen before and which the last four weeks had engraven there—a bitter, morose expression which even that indifferent, *blasé* air could not conceal.

He gazed silently out of the coach window and seemed as little inclined to converse as Eugenie herself. They had upon taking their seats met for the first time to-day, and had exchanged some commonplace remarks about the weather, the journey, and its object; then an icy silence had ensued, which seemed likely to continue until their arrival in the town.

The jaunt was pleasant in no respect. Though in this luxurious coach they felt nothing of the outside discomfort, yet these soft cushions could not wholly guard against the roughness of the road, over which,

in spite of the powerful horses, they dragged along very slowly. They had gone nearly half the distance and were in the middle of the forest, when a violent shock threw the carriage almost on its side. The coachman, with a half-muttered oath, reined in his horses; then he and the footman stepped down from the box, and from the excited conversation between them it was evident that something was the matter.

"What has happened?" asked Eugenie, excitedly springing from her seat.

Arthur showed far less interest to know what had happened. He would, from all appearances, have quietly waited until tidings were brought him, but now he felt in duty bound to let down the window and repeat his wife's question.

"Give yourself no uneasiness, Herr Berkow," said the coachman, who, the reins in his hand, appeared at the window. "We came within a hair's-breadth of being upset, but luckily we have escaped. Something must be broken in the hind wheel. Franz is looking to see what it is."

The intelligence Franz brought was not very consoling. The wheel was so badly injured that it would be impossible to go on. Both servants in perplexity looked at their master.

"I fear this accident will oblige us to give up our visits," said Arthur indifferently to his wife. "Franz will have to go to the house for another carriage, and when he returns it will be too late."

"Nothing then remains for us but to get out and return to the house."

"*To get out?*" asked Arthur in astonishment. "Do you really intend to return on foot?"

"And do you really intend to remain in this carriage until Franz brings us another?"

Arthur certainly had this intention. He thought it far better to lie two hours in the corner of the coach, where he would be shielded from wind and weather, than venture on a foot-tramp through the cold, wet forest. Eugenie saw this and smiled disdainfully.

"For my part," she said, "I will go back on foot rather than endure this tedious, aimless waiting. Franz will accompany me, as he is obliged to go. You, I suppose, will remain in the coach? I would on no account take upon myself the responsibility of your catching cold."

The unconcealed irony of these words effected what the accident could not have done: they drove the young man from his corner. He rose erect, burst open the door, and the next moment stood outside, offering his hand to assist his wife down the carriage steps. Eugenie hesitated.

"I implore you, Arthur——"

"I implore you at least not to make a spectacle to our servants by choosing the company of Franz in preference to mine. Shall I assist you down?"

The young wife gave an almost imperceptible shrug of the shoulders. Still, nothing remained to her but to accept the proffered hand, for the coachman and servant stood very near. She stepped from the coach and Arthur said to the attendants:

"I will accompany her ladyship home. Take the coach to some place of shelter and follow with the horses as quickly as possible."

The servants took off their hats, bowed, and then set about executing the command. With a somewhat repellent gesture Eugenie refused her husband's offered arm.

"I fear we shall be obliged to forego the promenade step here," she said. "I can look out for myself."

She in fact tried this, but it was only at the very first step to sink ankle-deep in the mud, and when in her fright she fled to the side of the road, it was to sink deeper yet in the water. There she stood, undecided what to do. The road seen from the coach had not appeared half so bad as she found it.

"We cannot get on here," said Arthur, who had tried the same experiment with like results. "We must go through the wood."

"Without knowing the way? We shall get lost."

"Oh, no! not at all. I remember a foot-path I often trod when a boy; it leads over the hill down into the valley and has the recommendation of very much shortening the route. We must seek it."

Eugenie still hesitated, but the absolute impossibility of walking over the half-flooded highway, rendered still more impassable by carriage ruts, left her no choice. She followed her husband, who at once turned to the left, and a few minutes later the deep dark green of the firs embraced them both.

There was a possibility of passing over the roots and mosses of this forest floor, at least for unspoiled feet. For a gentleman and a lady accustomed only to the parquet of the *salon*, for whose use at every little jaunt coaches and saddle-horses stood ready, and whose only walks had been limited to a ramble through the park in fine weather, this route offered difficulties enough; and besides — this cloudy, stormy day. The rain had ceased, but the whole region dripped with moisture and the clouds threatened at any moment to send down a new shower. Over an hour's distance from home, in the midst of the forest, through which they must wander at random like a pair of adventurers, without carriage or servant, without the slightest protection against wind and rain, it was indeed a situation strange as desperate for Arthur Berkow and his high-born consort.

The young woman, with her usual resolution, yielded to the inevitable. After the first ten steps she had seen the impossibility of rescuing her light silk dress and white *burnous*, and quietly yielding both a prey to the wet moss and dripping trees, she marched courageously onward. But her toilet, little designed for an excursion like this, was slight protection from the weather. Shivering, she drew the white cashmere wrap about her and shuddered involuntarily as the cold blasts swept past.

Her husband remarked this and paused. In his effeminacy he had thrown a cloak around him for protection, even in the close carriage. Now he

silently took off the cloak to place it around his wife's shoulders, but with a very decided gesture she drew back.

"I thank you, I do not need it."

"But you are taking cold."

"Oh, no! not at all. I am not so susceptible to the weather as you are."

Without a word Arthur took back the cloak, but he did not put it on again; he threw it negligently over his arm and in his light society dress walked by her side. Eugenie repressed her rising vexation. She scarce knew herself why this conduct so wounded her, but she would far rather have seen Arthur carefully guard his precious health by enveloping himself in the cloak she had so disdainfully rejected than thus recklessly expose himself to wind and weather.

A calm, deliberate submission to the inevitable was *her* business. She could not comprehend how her husband had assumed this right, and least of all could she comprehend how he, who had at first been horrified at the bare idea of this forest promenade, now seemed not at all to feel its inconveniences, while she already half-repented her resolution.

A gust of wind tore the hat from Arthur's head and blew it down a declivity from whose depths he could not recover it. Unmoved he gazed after the fugitive, and with an almost defiant gesture threw back his long brown hair. His feet at every step sank deep in the wet moss, and yet to Eugenie his step had never before seemed so firm and elastic.

The further he pressed into the green forest recesses the more his manner lost its wonted listlessness. His usually drooping eyes glanced sharply around to find the path they sought. The damp, gloomy forest really seemed to have an enlivening influence upon him, in such deep draughts did he inhale the strong aromatic odor of the firs, so rapidly did he lead his young wife under their rustling tops. Suddenly he paused and cried out almost triumphantly:

"There is the path!"

They saw before them a narrow foot-path which led straight through the forest, seeming to lose itself in the distance. Eugenie gazed in surprise at her husband. She certainly had not believed that he would prove a safe guide, and had quite made up her mind that they should be lost in the wood.

"You seem well acquainted with this region," she said as she trod the path by his side.

Arthur smiled, but this smile was not for her; it was for the surroundings, which he now carefully scanned.

"I ought to know my woods," he said. "We are old friends, though it is a long, long time since we have met."

Eugenie lifted her head in astonishment. This tone she had never heard from his lips: there lay within it deep, repressed feeling, which as it were betrayed itself in his voice.

"Do you love the forest so much?" she asked, involuntarily prolonging a conversation which

would otherwise have ended in the usual silence. "Why, then, during this whole four weeks have you not entered it?"

Arthur did not answer. He seemed to be dreaming, and his glance lost itself in the green, mist-veiled depths.

"*Why?*" he at length replied sullenly. "I do not know. Perhaps I was too lazy. One at length unlearns all in your Residence, especially the longing for his woodland solitudes."

"In *my* Residence? I thought you were the same as reared there."

"Certainly! only with this difference: my life ended when my so-called education began. All that had any value in life for me I left behind me when I entered those walls; for my early, sunny boyhood years were the only ones worth living."

It was a half-sad, half-resentful tone in which he uttered the words. But in Eugenie's soul the old bitterness again welled up. How dared *he* speak of sacrifice and renunciation? What could he know of these? For her, too, all happiness had ended with her childhood years; for her, with her entrance into society had begun that ascending scale of cares, humiliations, and despair which to her, as the *confidante* of her father, the one initiated into all the family secrets, had been the bitter school that, while it had steeled her character, had also robbed her of all the joys of youth. How different had been her husband's position—his past life! And he spoke of these as of misfortunes!

Arthur seemed to read these thoughts in her face as he turned to push aside a hanging bough which would have brushed against her.

"You think I, of all, have least reason to complain. Very likely. At least, I have always been told I have an enviable existence. But I assure you it is sometimes desperately barren and comfortless—such a life, where Fortune showers all her gifts at your feet and where you tread these gifts under your feet because you really do not know what else to do with them; so barren and comfortless that you sometimes feel as if, at any price, you would break away from this gilded happiness, even though it were to go out into storm and tempest!"

Eugenie's dark eyes hung in speechless astonishment upon his face, and a sudden fiery glow mounted to his forehead. The young husband seemed all at once to realize that he had been guilty of the unpardonable crime of betraying emotion in the presence of his wife. He frowned and threw a malicious glance upon the forest, which had led him to this outbreak of feeling; but the very next second he fell quite back into the old *blasé* manner.

"We really have more of storm and tempest than is agreeable," he said carelessly, turning his back to Eugenie as he strode onward. "The winds rage fearfully on that bare hill up there. We must wait until the worst is over: we cannot go down now."

In fact, as they emerged from the wood the storm met them, and so terrible was its might that they

could scarce stand upon their feet. It was evidently impossible to go on in the path, which now led abruptly down into the open valley; there was danger of being seized by the wind and hurled into the depths below. So nothing remained but to wait here in the protection of the trees until there should be a lull in the tempest.

They stood under a giant fir which towered up at the forest's edge. The storm shook those green arms the tree outspread to protect these two who had sought its shelter, and they swayed sighing up and down; but the firm gray trunk still offered a stay and a refuge for Eugenie, who leaned against it. In case of need there might have been room for two persons, but they would have had to press close together; and it was probably this consideration which decided Arthur to remain standing some steps from her, although he was only partially shielded, and the swaying branches rained down upon him abundant drops from the last shower. His hair fluttered in the wind and the drops ran down from his uncovered forehead. Still he did not make the slightest effort to change his place.

"Will you—would you not rather come here?" asked Eugenie hesitatingly, while she moved a little to one side to give him room upon the only dry place.

"Thank you! I would prefer not to annoy you by my nearness."

"Well, at least put on your cloak."

This time there was a sound as of entreaty in her voice.

"You will be quite wet through."

"Never mind. I am not so susceptible to the weather as you suppose."

The young woman bit her lips. It is not pleasant to be repulsed with your own weapons, but more than all else it angered her—this contempt with which he let the whole fury of the storm break over him, just to give her a lesson. She really thought this contempt indescribably ridiculous. *She* certainly could not suffer from it, and it was a matter of indifference to her whether he took cold and got sick or not; but it enraged her to see him stand there so calmly and maintain his place in the midst of the storm, perhaps with difficulty, but still to maintain it—he who half an hour ago, sleepy and shivering, had reclined amid the cushions of the luxurious coach and seemed to recoil from every breath of air that passed through the glass windows. Did he really need storm and tempest to prove to her that he was not quite the weakling she had deemed him?

Arthur meantime did not look as if he cared to prove anything; he seemed to have quite forgotten her presence. With folded arms he stood there and gazed up to the wooded mountains, the greater portion of which were visible from this height. Slowly his eyes swept from one summit to another, and as they did so Eugenie made the surprising discovery that her husband had very handsome eyes. This was indeed a surprise, for hitherto she had only known that there, under those half-closed lids, rested

something indolent and sleepy, and she had never taken the trouble to observe.

If he chanced to look up it had always been slowly, lazily, as if the glance cost him infinite trouble and was not worth the exertion. And yet this glance was well worth seeing. Judging from the expression of the face, one would have supposed that under those sunken lids lay a dull, cold blue eye, but in truth there glowed an eye of a deep dark brown, indolent and lifeless as yet; still one knew that these eyes could flame up in energy and passion. It was as if a world, long-since sunken and forgotten, lay imprisoned beneath this veiled glance, awaiting only its appointed hour to again emerge from the abyss.

Again in this young wife's soul rose tremulously the consciousness she had already felt while in the forest—the certainty that the father had sinned infinitely in the education of this son—sinned past all atonement.

They stood, both solitary, up there on the hill. A veil of mist lay over the forest, enveloping it in dense gray shadows, which now climbed up the dark firs, now in fluttering streamers waved from their tops, and now, ghost-like, flitted along the ground. And the same cloudy veil swayed and fluttered around the mountains yonder; the mists now dissolving, now rolling themselves together, afar up on those dusky summits and down in the steaming valleys. There was an endless ebbing and flowing, a falling and rising: one moment it

seemed as if mountain and forest would open to their lowest recesses; the next as if they would veil their secrets from every mortal eye.

All around raged the storm, plowing into these century-old firs as into a corn-field. Groaning, the giant trunks swayed to and fro; sighing, their stately tops bowed and bent, while above them lay the gray clouds in yawning, shapeless masses or swept onward in wild, disorderly flight. It was a storm such as has birth only in the bosom of the mountains; and yet it was a spring storm which raved and roared around those far-off heights.

Upon these blustering pinions come the spring. Not sunny and smiling as down in the valleys, but rough, grim, and terrible. But it was still the spring's breath which swayed the storm, the spring's salutation which rang out above all this riot.

In a spring storm, wild even as this, there lies a promise of sunny days to come—of the flowers and perfume that will ere long gladden the earth; a presage of that mighty creative life already struggling to bring up its thousand germs to the light. And they hear the call and answer it—these roaring forests, these rushing brooks, these steaming valleys. In this roaring and foaming and raging still rings out the triumph shout of Nature, who has now thrown off the last fetters of winter—her cry of joy that hails the approaching deliverer: "*The spring is coming!*"

It is something mysterious, such an hour of spring, and the myths of the mountains lend it their

own romantic spell. They tell of the mountain spirit who then strides on through his kingdom and whose might in such an hour, blessing or cursing, passes into the life of the mortal who lingers in this kingdom. Whatever there unites is united forever; whatever there separates is separated for all eternity. *They* needed no outward union, these two up on the hill yonder; they were united by the strongest bond that can make two mortals one; and yet they stood so far apart! They were as much strangers to each other as if a world lay between them.

The silence had endured a long time. Eugenie was the first to break it.

"*Arthur!*"

He started as if from awakening and turned to her.

"What is your wish?"

"It is so cold up here! Will you not—lend me your cloak?"

A flush passed over the young man's face as in speechless surprise he glanced up to her. He knew that this proud woman would rather have frozen in the icy blasts than thus condescend to ask for the covering she had scornfully rejected, and yet she did so in a hesitating tone, with downcast eyes, as if confessing a wrong.

The next moment he was near her with the cloak. She stood silent while he wrapped it around her shoulders, but as he was about to turn back to his place she gave him a mute, reproachful glance.

Arthur seemed to hesitate for a moment, but conscious that this glance had been almost the same as an entreaty, he conquered his obstinacy and remained at her side.

From the valley rose a dense cloudy wall, shutting closely around these two as if it would rivet them to this spot. Mountain and forest vanished in the gray vapor; but the fir rose giant-like above it and gazed down at these two mortals who had fled for protection to its arms. Over them swayed and rustled the dark boughs with their thousand strange, mysterious voices, between which resounded the fuller accords of the forest. It was fearfully oppressive in this fog: this swaying and rustling had an unearthly tone. Eugenie started up suddenly, as if she must break loose from a danger whose meshes were tightening all around her.

"The fog keeps growing thicker," she said, as if oppressed by its weight, "and the weather more uncomfortable. Do you believe that any danger is at hand?"

Arthur glanced up at the swaying masses of vapor and stroked the drops from his hair.

"I am not enough acquainted with our mountains to know how dangerous these storms may be," he said. "And even if there were danger, would you fear?"

"I am not timid; and yet one always fears when life is in peril."

"*Always?* I thought the life we had been

leading for these four weeks was not of that sort to cause one to tremble when it was in danger—least of all *you!*"

The young wife cast down her eyes.

"So far as I am aware, I have not troubled you with any complaints," she said softly.

"Oh, no! You certainly give utterance to no complaints. If you could only as well keep back the pallor from your cheeks as the complaints from your lips! You would like to do so, but there your strength of will founders. Do you believe that it gives me such great pleasure to see my wife silently fading at my side because destiny has forced her to this side?"

Now it was Eugenie's face that was covered with deep, glowing lushes; but it was not the reproach in his words which had sent this glow to her cheeks—it was the strange words he for the first time had used in speaking of her. "*My wife*," he had said. Yes, she was indeed married to him, but it had never yet occurred to her that he had the right to call her his wife.

"Why do you again touch upon this topic?" she asked evasively. "I hoped that with that first necessary explanation all was forever arranged between us."

"Because you seem to cherish the delusion that I will all your life keep you in these fetters, which surely are quite as oppressive to me as they can possibly be to you."

His voice was icy cold, and yet Eugenie glanced

quickly up to him without being able to read the slightest thing in his face. Why did he always veil those eyes when she strove to look into them? Would they not answer her or did they fear her?

"You speak of a—separation?"

"Do you think I could regard a lasting marriage between us as possible after that expression of—*high esteem* which that first evening I was forced to hear from your lips?"

Eugenie was silent. Over her head swayed and rustled still the green arms of the fir tree; the forest voices warningly and threateningly called down to this wedded pair about to utter the word of life-long separation; but neither would heed the warning.

"We are not at liberty to waive all outward considerations," continued Arthur in the same tone. "Your father and mine are too well known in their circle, our marriage caused too great a sensation, to be dissolved at once, without giving the Residence inexhaustible material for gossip, of which we should be the ridiculous hero and heroine. People do not without scandal separate after a twenty-four hours' marriage; neither after a week or a month. For the sake of the proprieties they endure a year of each other's society, and then, with some appearance of truth, declare that their characters are incompatible. I hope we too shall be able to live together that length of time, but our strength for the task does not seem to be increasing. If things go on as they are we shall both sink beneath it."

The arm which the young woman had twined around the trunk of the tree slightly trembled, but her voice was very firm as she replied:

"When I have once undertaken a task I do not succumb so easily; and as for you, I do not believe you have any special sensibility to the miseries of this life we live together."

His eyes flashed. It was again that quick, lightning-like coruscation which came and went, leaving no trace behind. The eyes were dead and expressionless as ever when, after a brief pause, he answered:

"You really do not believe that? Ah? Well, my sensibilities have nothing to do with the matter. I should not have touched upon this subject if I had not seen the necessity of giving you the satisfaction of knowing that our marriage will be dissolved as soon as, with a due regard to the world, will be possible. Perhaps I shall not now see you so pale as in these last days, and perhaps you will now believe, what you have hitherto regarded as a falsehood, that I had no suspicion of those machinations which won for me by force a hand which I supposed freely given."

"I believe you, Arthur," said she softly; "*now* I believe you."

Arthur smiled, but it was a smile of infinite bitterness with which he received this first proof of the confidence of his wife in the moment when he renounced her.

"The fog begins to clear," he said, "and the

storm, for a few minutes at least, seems to have subsided. We must hasten down into the valley. There we are sheltered and can very soon reach the farm, where it is to be hoped we can procure a carriage. Will you follow me?"

The path was steep and slippery, but Arthur today seemed determined to belie his whole nature. He strode firmly and securely down the hill, while Eugenie, in her thin shoes and long dress and still more hindered in her motions by the cloak, made but slight progress. Arthur saw that he must come to her help, but a mere offer of the arm would not answer. To really aid her he must carry her; and this—would not do.

This husband hesitated about offering his wife an attention he would at once have offered to any other lady, and what any stranger under the circumstances would have accepted unhesitatingly, this wife hesitated to accept from her husband. She trembled slightly as, after a brief delay, he took her in his arms.

Neither spoke a word during the ten minutes' walk, but Eugenie's face grew paler at every step. It seemed as if she could not endure that this arm should be around her; that she must lean against this shoulder, so near that his breath touched her; and yet as much as possible he lightened the painfulness of the situation. Not a single glance did he give her; his whole attention seemed engrossed by the path; and certainly great care and circumspection were demanded to avoid slipping down. But

in spite of all this repose the young man's lips again showed that treacherous quiver, and as, when they arrived at the foot of the hill, with a deep breath of relief he set down his unwilling burden, one could have plainly seen that during this strange descent he had been anything but calm.

The farm buildings already glimmered through the trees, and hastily, as if at any price they must cut short this time of being left to themselves, both took the path thither. Above them still raged the spring storm, and up on the hill the mists lay thick around the fir at the forest's edge, the tree which had protectingly folded its arms around them in that hour, of which the old myth of the mountain says: "What here unites is united forever, and whatsoever here separates is separated for all eternity!

CHAPTER VIII.

Herr Berkow having arrived while Arthur and his wife were in the forest met them on their return. He seemed to have lost that exultant mood which he had brought with him on his former visit, when in his first flush of triumph over the new aristocratic relationship.

He was, as usual, exceedingly polite to his daughter-in-law and boundlessly indulgent to his son, but his manner was hasty, restless, and absent. This manner, although plainly visible that first evening, was still more noticeable the next morning when Arthur entered his apartment and requested an interview.

"At some other time, Arthur," he said evasively. "Do not annoy me now with trifles when my head is full of serious things. Money and business matters in the Residence are giving me endless trouble: all is loss and stagnation. But you understand nothing of this and it cannot interest you. I shall bring things back to the old routine, but I must beg you just now to spare me a recital of your private affairs."

"It is no private affair; the matter is of the deepest importance to you. I am sorry that when

you are so overwhelmed with business I really must claim an hour of your time, but it cannot be otherwise."

"Well, then, after dinner!" exclaimed Berkow impatiently. "You can wait, and I have no time now. The officers already await me in the conference chamber, and I have promised the chief engineer to drive out with him after the conference."

"To drive out?" asked Arthur. "You will then inspect the mines?"

"No. I will inspect the alterations which have been made in the elevators during my absence. What could I do in the mines?"

"I believed that you would some time personally convince yourself if things are really as bad down there as they say."

Berkow, who was just ready to go, turned suddenly and gazed at his son in utter astonishment.

"What do *you* know about the mines? Who has put this into your head? It seems that the director, finding I would not listen to his demand for money for repairs, turned to my son. He went to the right person, truly!"

He laughed aloud, without noticing the expression of displeasure in Arthur's face as he returned sharply:

"But still an examination must be made as to how far these repairs are necessary; and if you would only go down with the engineer you could give the shafts a passing inspection."

"I shall be careful not to do that," replied Berkow. "Do you think I want to risk my life? There is no doubt that things are dangerous in their present state."

"And still you send hundreds of workmen down daily?"

The tone of the question was peculiar—so peculiar that the father frowned.

"Would you give me a moral lecture, Arthur? I think this must sound rather strange from your mouth. You seem, in the dullness of your stay in the country, to have taken to philanthropy. Have done with that: in our circumstances it is a very expensive passion. I certainly shall take care that in case of accident no loss may accrue to me, which would be very inconvenient just now. What is absolutely necessary will be done, but I have no money for extensive repairs. And besides, I cannot allow the works to stop even for the shortest time. To enable me to do this you must want far less money than in those days just before your marriage. I really cannot understand why you all at once begin to trouble yourself about matters of which you are entirely ignorant. Give your mind rather to the furnishing of your parlors, to your winter *soirées* in the Residence, and leave to me the care and responsibility in matters of which you do not know the slightest thing."

"*No, papa, not the slightest!*" emphasized the young man, with rising bitterness. "For that you certainly have cared."

"I really believe you would reproach me!" cried Berkow excitedly. "Have you not tasted all the joys of life? Have I shunned any sacrifice to secure you these in fullest measure? Shall I not leave you riches—I who began the world without a penny? Have I not through this marriage to the Baroness Windeg gained you admission to the circles of the nobility, to which you will sooner or later belong? I would like to see the father who has done so much for his son as I!"

During this whole speech Arthur had gazed silently out of the window. Now he turned to go.

"You are quite right, papa," he said; "but I see that you have neither time nor patience to listen to what I intended to say to you. Let it be after dinner, then."

He went; and Berkow, shaking his head, gazed after him. His son of late had sometimes become quite incomprehensible to him. But he had no time to think of this, so he hastily closed his writing-desk, took his hat, and passed over to the conference chamber with an air that foreboded no good to the waiting officers.

Meantime the miners had gathered at the shaft, ready to descend to the second stint for the day. All were waiting for the overseer-in chief, who had not as yet made his appearance. They were men of all ages—men skilled in every sort of work that miners know, but most were grouped around Ulrich Hartmann, who, with his foot planted upon the ladder and his arms folded, though he was for the

moment silent, seemed undeniably the leader of all. He could not have been making a formal harangue; for this neither time nor place were suited; but even in this short chance interview the speech seemed to be of matters which now formed the principal topic among the workmen.

"Give it up, Ulrich; they will not join us from the other works," said the young miner Lorenz, who stood near Hartmann. "They think it is too soon for them; they are not prepared; in short, they have no wish to join us, but will wait and see how matters turn out."

Ulrich threw back his head in scorn.

"Well, for all I care we will go on alone. We have no time to lose."

There was a movement of surprise among the workmen.

"Alone?" asked some. "Without our comrades?" added the others; and the majority, with an anxious expression, repeated, "*Now?* Right away?"

"*Now*, say I!" cried Ulrich emphatically and imperiously, while he threw a defiant glance around him. "If any of you is of another opinion, say so!"

Not an inconsiderable portion of those present seemed to be of another opinion, still none ventured any decided opposition; but Lorenz said gravely:

"But you yourself think it would be better if all the works around us stopped at once."

"Is it my fault that they wait and wait until our

patience is at an end?" asked Ulrich hastily. "If they are determined to wait, we *cannot:* that they know right well. They want to send us on ahead into the fire, to see how the battle turns out with us. True comradeship that! Well, we will fight it out without them."

"And do you really believe that he"—Lorenz glanced in the direction of the chief's house—"that he will yield?"

"He *must*," replied Ulrich decidedly, "or he is ruined. Even now some of his speculations are turning out badly. Besides, he must pay all his son's debts, and the new city residence will cost well on to the hundred thousands. If the works should lie idle now, just now, when the large contracts are closed, then there would be an end to his magnificence. Two years ago, perhaps, he might have borne up through all: now he cannot. We shall win the day if we threaten him."

"God grant that we may really win the day!" sighed one of the miners, an elderly man, with pale, shrunken face and troubled air. "But it would be dreadful if we took all this want and anxiety upon us for nothing, and for weeks long starved with our wives and children, only at last to have things remain as of old. If we should wait until our comrades——"

"Ah, yes, if we wait for the others," here and there a voice ventured to suggest.

"Senseless babble, and no end!" broke out Ulrich wildly. "I tell you that now, right away, is the

best time; and we will go on. Will you go with me or will you not? Answer!"

"But do not be so hasty," said Lorenz appeasingly. "You know we all go with you, no matter how far it is; let them on the other works do as they will. We are united; no one will leave you in the decisive hour."

"I would advise no one to remain behind if things become serious," said Ulrich, darting a morose, threatening glance to that corner whence the opposition had come. "Then we could endure no cowardice; then each must stand by the other, and woe to him who does it not!"

The young leader, in this despotic manner, seemed to possess the most effective weapon with his comrades, to stifle every rising germ of contradiction. His few opposers, without exception elderly men, were silent; while the others, especially the younger, with loud cheers pressed around Hartmann, who more calmly added:

"But now there is no time to discuss matters. This evening we will——"

"The overseer!" interrupted several voices, while all eyes turned to the door.

"Disperse!" commanded Ulrich, and obedient to the order the crowd dispersed. Each took his miner's lamp, which he had just laid aside.

The chief overseer, who rather unexpectedly entered, must have seen the hastily dispersing throng; perhaps he had heard the command, for he gazed searchingly around.

"You seem to hold your comrades under excellent control, Hartmann," he said coolly.

"Rather so, Herr Overseer-in-chief," replied Ulrich in the same tone.

To the chief overseer, as well as to the other officers, the plots of the workmen were no longer a secret, but he pretended to have seen and heard nothing and continued indifferently:

"Herr Berkow is coming with the engineer to inspect the elevator. You and Lorenz are to remain at the foot-way shaft until the gentlemen again emerge to the light of day. Steiger Wilm can attend to your men until they return."

Ulrich gave a silent acquiescence to the order and remained back with Lorenz, while the others, under the lead of the chief overseer, went down. But as the last of his comrades vanished the young miner turned resentfully away.

"Cowards they are, the whole of them!" he muttered fiercely, "who cannot stir from their place by reason of their irresolution and timidity. They know as well as I that we ought to avail ourselves of this very hour; and yet they will not go forward because they are alone—because the others will not stand by them. It is a lucky thing that we have Berkow against us and no other. If he were a politic man, who at the right time showed us his teeth and at the right time gave us good words, we could bring nothing to pass."

"Do you think he will do nothing, then?" asked Lorenz somewhat distrustfully.

"No; he is cowardly like all tyrants. He swaggers and threatens while he has the upper hand, but if his skin or his gold-sacks were in danger he would crawl on his hands and knees. He has made himself so thoroughly detested, he has so goaded the miners to extremities, that at last not one will remain behind. Then it will be well; then we shall have him in our hands."

"And the young gentleman—do you think he will take no part when the riot breaks loose?"

An expression of undisguised contempt played around Ulrich's mouth as he scornfully replied:

"*He* counts for nothing. At the very first alarm he will run back to the city for safety. If we had to do with him it would be sooner over. He says yes to all if one threatens not to let him sleep on. The father will give us more to do."

"He will inspect the elevator," said Lorenz thoughtfully. "Will he also go into the mines?"

Ulrich laughed bitterly.

"What are you thinking of? We must daily risk our lives down there: it is well enough for us, but the chief remains in the foot-way shaft. I wish I could have him once alone with me, eye to eye: he should teach me that trembling we must so often go through with below."

The young man's glance and tone were so wild, so filled with the deepest hatred, that his far more moderate companion was driven to silence, and for a time the conversation ended. There was a long pause. Hartmann had stepped to a window and

was gazing out impatiently, when all at once he felt a hand on his shoulder, and Lorenz stood at his side,

"I wish to ask you something, Ulrich," he began hesitatingly. "You will tell me if I beg you to. How do you stand with Martha?"

Some moments passed before Ulrich answered.

"I with Martha? Must you know that?"

The young miner cast down his eyes.

"You know that long as I have followed the girl she has never liked me, because she—liked another. Well, I cannot really blame her for it"—his glance, with a sort of painful admiration, rested upon his friend—"and if it is really true that you stand in my way, then I must drive the thing from my head. But tell me frankly, are you lovers?"

"No, Carl," replied Ulrich sullenly; "we are not lovers and never shall be. That we both know. I do not stand in your way with the girl, and I believe she will marry you if you ask her."

A gleam of joy passed over the young man's face as he asked quickly:

"Do you really mean it? If you say it it must be so, and I will try my luck that way this very evening."

Ulrich frowned.

"This evening? Do you think it of no consequence that we are to have a consultation to-night and that you belong with us and not with the craft of wooers? But you are not a whit better than the others. Now that we are about to go into the fight, your head is full of your love-affairs; when every

man should be glad he has neither wife nor child, you think of marrying! I am out of patience with you all!"

"But I *must* ask Martha," declared Lorenz apologetically, "and if she really says yes it will still be a long while before our marriage. Hartmann, you do not know how it is with one who loves that he cannot possess—how it wrings his heart day by day to see another with his chosen one—another who has only to reach forth his hand after that for which he would give his life and yet cannot grasp. You——"

"Stop, Carl!" interrupted Ulrich, with trembling lips, while he let his clinched hand fall so violently that it threatened the wood-work of the window. "Go to Martha; marry her if you will; but speak to me no more of such things. I will not, I cannot hear it!"

The young miner gazed in astonishment at his friend; he could not understand this agitation—this wild renunciation—as he must have given up the girl of his own free will. But there was no time to ponder over the matter, for at this moment Berkow's sharp voice was heard outside. In a most ungracious voice he said to the officers who accompanied him:

"I beg most emphatically, gentlemen, to hear no more of this. The old ventilators have done service for a long time and no accident has happened; they must still answer. I will have nothing to do with these costly repairs you are pleased to declare

necessary because they do not come out of your pockets. Do you think I wish to found here a model philanthropic institution? The working capabilities must be increased, and the sum required for that will be granted—nothing more. If the miners are in danger I cannot help it; they earn their bread in this way. I cannot throw away money to secure a few miners and upstarts from accident that may possibly happen to them, but which up to this time has not happened. The repairs in the mines will be limited to things absolutely needed to increase their capabilities, and this I tell you once for all."

He flung open the door of the shed and seemed unpleasantly surprised to find the two miners, whom he had not supposed to be here, and who must have heard his last words. Still more unpleasant seemed their presence to the chief engineer.

"Hartmann, what are you doing up here?" he asked roughly as he entered.

"The chief overseer told us we must accompany the gentlemen into the foot-way shaft," answered Ulrich, without turning his glowing eyes from Berkow.

The chief engineer shrugged his shoulders and turned to Berkow with an air which plainly said, "He might have chosen another for this service." But he made no remark.

"Very well!" said Berkow curtly. "Go ahead and we will follow. '*Glück auf!*'"

Both miners obeyed, but when out of sight of the gentlemen Lorenz paused for a moment.

"Ulrich!"

"What do you wish?"

"Did you hear?"

"That he cannot throw away a few thousands to secure the lives of his miners, but that the working capacity of the mines shall be increased by hundreds of thousands? Well, no one is safe here in these depths, and he goes down to-day. We will wait and see whose turn comes first! Go on, Carl!"

It seemed as if, with the storm of the day before, the long-awaited spring had won by force her kingdom. There had been a magic change in the weather during the night. Fog and clouds had vanished, leaving no trace, and with them wind and cold. The hills, now clearly visible, were flooded with sunshine, and around them floated the breath of the warm, delicious air. One could at last indulge a hope that the incessant rain and tempest of the last few weeks was over and would be followed by a long, bright spring and golden summer.

Eugenie had stepped to the balcony and was gazout into the now, at last, unveiled landscape. Her eyes thoughtfully and dreamily rested upon the hills yonder. Perhaps she thought of that dark hour yesterday upon the height; perhaps there yet toned in her ears the rustling and sighing of the green fir boughs; but the remembrance was quickly and forcibly broken by the sound of a post-horn very near. Immediately after an extra post-chaise halted below the terrace, and with a cry of joy and surprise the young woman flew from the balcony.

"My father!"

It was indeed Baron Windeg who quickly stepped from the coach and entered the house. His daughter was already upon the steps to receive him. It was their first meeting since her marrriage, and in spite of the presence of the two servants, who came rushing in to receive the distinguished guest, the father clasped his child in his arms just as passionately as on the evening of her wedding-day, when in her riding-dress she had bidden him adieu. The young woman at length gently loosed herself from his embrace and withdrew with him into her favorite apartment, the little blue *salon*.

"What a surprise, papa!" said Eugenie, still beaming with joy and excitement. "I had no presentiment of this visit from you."

The baron, his arm still around her, sat down with her on the sofa.

"It was not contemplated, my child. A journey led me into this region, and I could and would not shun the circuitous route of a few hours which would bring me to you."

"A journey?" Eugenie gazed questioningly into her father's face, and his eyes rested searchingly upon her features, as if he would there read the history of the weeks since she left him; but now, as her glance fell upon the hat he still held in his left hand, she turned pale with terror.

"For God's sake, papa, what means this mourning band? My brothers?"

"Are well and send you hearty greeting," said

the baron consolingly. "Do not be alarmed, my child! For those you love you need not tremble. A melancholy event has happened—one which nearly concerns our family; and yet I may well say that we can none of us lay it to heart. Soon I will tell you all. But now you must relate to me——"

"No, no!" interrupted Eugenie impatiently. "I must first know what this crape means. Whom have we to mourn?"

Windeg set the hat with its mourning band to one side and folded his arms close around his daughter. There was something painful, convulsive, in the tenderness with which he pressed her to his heart.

"I am on a journey to pay the last honors to our Cousin Rabenau. His estates lie in this province."

Eugenie started. "Count Rabenau? The heir?"

"Is dead," added the baron emphatically. "In the fullness of life and of health, a few weeks before his intended marriage—certainly no one could have foreseen this."

Eugenie had become deathly white; the tidings did not touch her heart, and yet she was fearfully excited. She said not a word, but her father seemed to comprehend her emotion.

"You know we were for a long time estranged," he continued sadly. "I could not tolerate Rabenau's rough, wild ways, and I shall never forget the cruel repulsion I was forced to receive from him six months ago. He could have rescued us had he wished; it would have been an easy thing for him;

but he roughly and harshly repelled me. Now he is dead—dead without heirs. I succeed to the property now when it is too late—now when I have sacrificed my child."

There lay a convulsive sorrow in these words. Eugenie strove to control her feelings, and in a few minutes she succeeded.

"Oh, papa, you need not think of me! I—I breathe lightly at the thought that you will have so abundant a recompense for the humiliations you have suffered, but the suddenness, the unexpectedness of this news overcame me. We could never have hoped for the heirship."

"Never!" said the baron mournfully. "Rabenau was young and healthy; he was about to marry. Who could have dreamed that he would be stricken down by a three days' illness? But if his death was decreed, why, why could it not have happened sooner? Four weeks ago it would have helped us; a fourth part of the wealth now flowing in upon me would have saved us. I could have given back his money to that villain who plunged us into misfortune—his money which he demanded, with a hundredfold usury, and have needed not that my only daughter should be its price. I accepted your sacrifice, Eugenie, God knows, not of my own free will; it was for my name, for the future of my sons. But that this whole bitter sacrifice should have been made in vain, when a chance delay of a few short weeks might have spared it to me—this mockery of fate I cannot bear!"

He clasped passionately her hand in his, but this young woman had already won back all her pride, all her self-control. Fearfully as this "too late" might have moved her, one saw no further trace of suffering.

"You should not speak so, papa!" she returned firmly. "It would have been a wrong to your other children. This death, which, knowing what Count Rabenau was, we can mourn only formally, frees you from many burdens. My marriage averted only the most threatening. There still remained enough which pressed heavily upon us, which later might perhaps have brought you into humiliating dependence upon that man. This danger is now forever averted. You can repay all you have received from him. We owe him nothing more."

"But he owes you to us!" interrupted Windeg bitterly, "and he will guard against ever paying this debt. That is why this rescue galls me. A short time ago I should have greeted it with transport; now it drives me to despair on your account."

Eugenie turned and bent low over the flowers that sent up their perfume from a vase near her.

"I am perhaps not so unhappy as you and my brothers believe," she said softly.

"Are you not? Do you think your letters have deceived me? I knew beforehand that you would spare us, but if a doubt had remained to me your paleness speaks plainly enough. You are unhappy, Eugenie; you must be unhappy by the side of this man who——"

"Papa, you speak of my husband!"

The young wife, as she uttered these words, started up so hastily, so passionately, that her father recoiled and gazed at her in surprise, as much astonished at her manner as at the deep scarlet glow which covered her face.

"Pardon me!" he said. "I can never accustom myself to the thought that my daughter belongs to Arthur Berkow, and that I am in his house which I am forced to enter when I would see my child. You are right. I must spare your feelings when I speak of the man to whom you are married, even though I see plainly enough how much you have suffered through him and still suffer."

The deep flush had slowly died out from Eugenie's face, but a treacherous glow still remained as she answered:

"You err. I have no complaint to make of Arthur. He has from the first maintained a distance for which I can but thank him."

The baron's eyes flashed.

"I would not advise him or his father to forget the respect they owe you—to fail in appreciating the honor you have brought to their house, where hitherto much honor has not been found. But, Eugenie, I can at least offer you one consolation. You will not long bear the name to which attaches so much vulgarity, so much villainy against us and others. None the less villainy because the law cannot punish it. I have taken care that this plebeian title shall not much longer annoy you."

Eugenie looked at her father in surprise.

"What do you mean by these words?" she asked.

"I have entered upon the necessary steps for your"—the baron had to make a powerful effort at self-mastery before he could utter that word—"your *husband's* elevation to the nobility. Only his elevation—not his father's. Berkow I would not recognize, even formally, as belonging to our rank. A change of name very often accompanies such a dignity, and it will in this case. You can choose among your estates whatever name seems to you most fitting for the new, noble race."

"For the new, noble race!" repeated Eugenie in a hollow voice. "Build no hopes upon that, papa; and if you wish this title of nobility on my account you err—still you are right, and in any event it is best. The title of nobility will amply compensate Arthur for all he must renounce."

There was an expression of overpowering bitterness in these words, and yet through all this bitterness pulsated a half-repressed sorrow; for Windeg, one was as incomprehensible as the other. His daughter's words remained enigmatical to him. He was just about asking an explanation, when a servant announced the young Herr Berkow, who had come to greet the baron.

Arthur entered and approached his father-in-law with some polite commonplaces in regard to this agreeable but unexpected visit, and then he relapsed into his usual languor and indifference. It was evi-

dent enough that he only sought to perform that imperative duty of politeness which bade him welcome his father-in-law. The baron seemed to quite ignore the necessity of this welcome. As now no strangers were present, the formality of shaking hands was omitted and gave place to a cold bow on either side. The older gentleman then sat down by his daughter, and the younger remained standing by his chair, with the evident intention of leaving as soon as possible.

Windeg, perfect man of the world that he was, in spite of the exciting conversation he had just carried on with Eugenie, at once resumed his society manner. The usual questions and answers in regard to the various members of the family followed. The demise of Count Rabenau was announced, and very formally deplored by Arthur, who certainly had no suspicion of the change this demise had made in the circumstances of his new relatives. At length the baron passed to another theme.

"I bring other tidings from the Residence, which for you, Herr Berkow, must be of the highest interest," he said complacently. "I may well assume that the wish of your father in regard to an elevation of rank has been no secret to you, and I can assure you that its fulfillment is at hand. In one point of view there are certainly insuperable obstacles—there are certain prejudices against the elder Herr Berkow personally which can scarce be surmounted; but the powers that be are quite ready to distinguish one of our first industrial proprietors

by conferring a title upon his son. I hope in a short time to be able to congratulate you."

Arthur had listened without the least change of manner. Now he lifted his eyes, and immediately Eugenie's glance, with an interest she herself could not define, was fixed upon those eyes. And yet in them one could not read the slightest thing.

"May I ask, Herr Baron, if in this transaction you have been governed solely by the wishes of my father or by consideration for your daughter?"

Baron Windeg struggled with a slight embarrassment. He had certainly reckoned upon thanks, and instead came this strange question.

"When this union had been once decided upon your father's wish and mine became the same," he replied constrainedly. "But I did not at that time conceal from Herr Berkow my opinion concerning his personal claims to that dignity, and I received from him the assurance that if necessity required he would renounce the honor in favor of his son, to whom by this step only he could secure a brilliant future."

"Then I regret that my father did not inform me of the progress of an affair which I regarded only as an undeveloped plan," said Arthur coolly. "And I still more regret, Herr Baron, that you have used your influence to secure for me an honor which I must absolutely decline."

The baron sprang from his seat and gazed at his son-in-law with staring eyes.

"Pardon me, Herr Berkow! I might not have heard distinctly. I thought you spoke of declining."

"Of declining the title if offered me—yes, Herr Baron!"

Windeg quite lost his self-possession, a thing which very seldom happened.

"Well, then, I must entreat you to give me the reasons for this, to say the least, strange refusal. I have the greatest curiosity to know."

Arthur glanced over at his wife. She had started involuntarily at his words, and a deep, hot flush again overspread her cheeks. Their eyes met and for an instant rested on each other, but the young man did not seem to imbibe much humility from this glance, for his voice had a decided dash of scorn as he replied:

"The strangeness lies less in my declining than in the manner of the offering. If a title of nobility had been decreed to my father on account of the service he has undeniably rendered to industry, as his heir I should, in any event, have accepted it. It is, like any other title, a distinction, and as such honorable. They have not thought best to confer it on him, and I naturally am no judge of the prejudices they may have against him. But for my own part I have not the slightest claim to such a dignity, and I therefore deem it better not to let the Residence assert that an alliance with the Windeg family must, as a natural consequence, be followed by a diploma of nobility."

He had thrown out these last words very indifferently, and yet Eugenie angrily compressed her lips; she knew that they were designed solely for her.

Would he really break free from all that could give her the right to despise him? And now more than ever she felt the wish to despise him.

"I seem to have erred in regard to the reasons which led you to desire this relationship," said the baron deliberately, "but I must confess that I consider these ideas of very recent date with you; for before your marriage your views were entirely different."

"Before my marriage!" An endlessly bitter smile played around Arthur's lips. "Then I had not learned, Herr Baron, how your circle regarded myself and my relations to that circle. Since, in rather a merciless way, all this has been made clear to me, and you cannot be surprised if I decline henceforth and forever to be considered an unbidden intruder into that circle."

Eugenie's fingers here clasped so tightly the rose she had taken from the vase that the delicate flower suffered the same fate the fan had a little time before met in Arthur's hands. It fell crushed upon the carpet. Arthur did not remark this. He had almost turned his back to her and was facing her father, who gazed at him with an expression which seemed to ask if this was really Arthur Berkow, his son-in-law.

"I have no conceivable idea who has thus been exaggerating matters to you," returned the baron gravely, "but I must beg you to have some regard for Eugenie. In the *rôle* which you expect to play next winter in the Residence she cannot—pardon

me, Herr Berkow—wear your plebeian name. That was neither your father's intention nor my own."

Arthur fixed a long, lowering gaze upon his wife. Much as she was naturally inclined to assert her opinion and her will, she had taken no part in this conversation.

"By winter circumstances may be entirely different from what we now dream. Leave that to Eugenie and me. For the present, nothing remains to be said but that I persist in my refusal. As the honor was intended for me alone, I alone have the right to accept or to decline it, and I decline absolutely a distinction which—pardon me, Herr Baron—I will not owe to the aristocratic name of my wife!"

Windeg rose, deeply offended.

"Then nothing remains to me but to recall, hastily as possible, the steps already taken in this affair, so that I may become no more compromised than I am at present. Eugenie, you are absolutely silent. What have you to say in regard to the views you have just heard expressed by your husband?"

Answer was to be spared the young wife, for at this moment the door opened—not gently as usual by a servant—it was hastily flung open, and without announcement, with an ashy white face and an entire neglect of all those forms he was wont so punctiliously to observe, in rushed Herr Wilberg.

"Is Herr Berkow here? I beg your ladyship's pardon—I must this moment speak with Herr Berkow!"

"What has happened?" asked Arthur, advancing to meet the young man, whose agitated face betrayed him a messenger of ill.

"An accident!" gasped Wilberg breathlessly. "Down in the foot-way shaft. Your father is badly injured—very badly—the director sent me——"

He had time to say no more, for Arthur had already hurried past him and was outside the door. The young officer was about to follow, when the baron detained him in the outer corridor.

"Have you told the son the whole truth?" he asked gravely. "With me you need conceal nothing. Is Herr Berkow dead?"

"Yes," broke forth Wilberg. "He was coming up with the Steiger Hartmann; the rope broke. Hartmann saved himself by a spring upon the last platform but one. Herr Berkow fell to the bottom. No one knows how the accident happened, but it can no longer be kept secret. Inform her ladyship, Herr Baron. I must go!"

He hastened after Arthur, while Windeg turned back to the parlor, where, in breathless excitement, Eugenie met him.

"What have you learned, papa? Wilberg's face spoke of more than a mere injury. What has happened?"

"The worst!" replied the baron, trembling. "We have just been bitterly arraigning this man, Eugenie. Now there is an end of hatred and hostility between us and him. Death has canceled all."

CHAPTER IX.

The first week with its melancholy rites was over, but that undefined oppression which lies upon every house of mourning had not lifted; it seemed only the more heavy now that the excitement of the funeral arrangements was over.

There had been no lack in manifestations of outward sympathy. Berkow's position, his extensive acquaintance and connection with various circles, had made his death a notable event. The funeral *cortége*, which naturally had included the officers and the whole body of miners, had seemed interminable. Visiting-cards and letters of condolence in countless number covered the young heir's writing-table, while his wife received calls from all the family acquaintances far and near. They were shown every possible attention—more than Berkow in his lifetime could ever have dreamed of. In their case, to use Baron Windeg's diplomatic phrase, people had no "prejudices" to overcome.

But this loss touched no living heart—seemingly not even that of the dead man's only child, for whom he had done so much. It is difficult to love one for whom we feel no respect. None could tell, however, whether Arthur Berkow had been deeply

or only superficially moved by his father's death. His entire composure seemed to indicate the latter, and yet since this catastrophe he had been terribly in earnest, and inaccessible to all save those with whom he had the most urgent business.

None who knew the immediate circumstances could wonder at Eugenie's entire composure. With her, as well as with her father, hatred had ceased at Berkow's death; they had never pretended to any other sentiment; and this stand had unfortunately been taken by many, for there was only too much reason for it.

The officers had often been galled by the brutal, haughty treatment of this *parvenu*, who regarded their knowledge and capabilities only as a sort of merchandise which stood at his absolute disposal when he had paid its price—*too often* to mourn a chief who had shown no respect for ability or character, but only for the capacity of studying his advantage and doing the most to advance his interests.

Still worse had he been with the workmen. Toward them he had shown an utter want of feeling, without one impulse of compassion, one spark of sympathy.

But, as we have before said, Berkow was an industrial genius of the first rank. He had raised himself from poverty and obscurity to wealth and influence. He had called into life business activities which could rank among the first in the land. He had won a place in which he might have been a blessing to thousands.

He had not become this; he had not willed to become it; and so his memory must be given over to that execration which found vent in the deep sigh of relief which at his sudden death passed over all his estates, through all his works—in that unspoken and yet deeply felt "*God be thanked!*"

Whether the heirship to such a life—to all it had sowed during these ten years past—was really so enviable a thing as outward appearances would indicate, might well be doubtful. In any event, this heirship rolled a burden of responsibility upon the shoulders of the young heir, to which, according to general opinion, he was quite unequal.

He had, it is true, officers of all grades, deputies, and attorneys ready to his call; but the father had been accustomed to keep all these in dependence on himself, to subject them to his absolute control; now the hand and eye of the master were wanting, the master himself was wanting.

The son must take the reins into his own hand, and while attempting to do this he must encounter the judgment, or rather the prejudice, of his dependents—not audible, but he saw in their manner, in many an expressive shrug of the shoulder, that they did not at all count upon him.

In the conference chamber the assembled officers were awaiting the chief, who had summoned them for this hour; but their perplexed, anxious, and agitated faces showed that the matter in hand was something more than a formal greeting and introduction, now that the first days of mourning were over.

"This is a blow," said the director to Herr Schäffer—"the worst that could befall us. We knew long ago what the men were planning and plotting among themselves. It is just the same all over the neighboring works. We saw it coming; we took precautions against it; but that it should be now, at this very moment! That leaves us quite at their mercy."

"Hartmann has well chosen his time," said the chief engineer bitterly. "He very well knows what he can do, even if he goes on without aid from the other works. Our chief dead, all the business in disorder, the young heir incapable of any energetic measures—now he comes with his demands! I have always told you this Hartmann was a thorn in our flesh. The workmen are naturally honest and good. We cannot blame them for demanding security for their lives in the mines and wages that will keep them and theirs from starvation. They have long enough borne up under wrong and oppression, but they should have made sensible demands, such as we could grant. What they dictate under this leader is past belief; it is the same as an open insurrection."

"But what will the young chief do?" asked Wilberg in a half-whisper. Among these perplexed and anxious ones, he was the most perplexed and anxious of all.

"What he *must* do under the momentary circumstances," returned Herr Schäffer gravely: "grant their demands."

"Begging your pardon, he cannot do that!" exclaimed the chief engineer. "That would subvert all discipline and in a year and a day make him a ruined man. I, at least, shall not remain upon the works when this happens."

Schäffer shrugged his shoulders.

"And still he has scarce any other alternative. I have already told you that things with us are by no means so prosperous as they seem. We have latterly had losses, very serious losses; we shall be obliged to cover deficits on all sides; to make sacrifices; and then there are so many other obligations—enough, for present returns, we are solely dependent upon the works. Let them lie some months idle, and we could not fulfill our contracts for this year, and that would be our ruin."

"The miners must know how matters stand," said the chief enigneer sullenly, "or they would not dare go on in this way; and we are very well aware that concessions once made cannot be recalled. Hartmann will use every effort to carry through his plans, and when under the compelling force of circumstances he has gained his point— What did Herr Arthur say when you informed him of the state of affairs?"

It was strange that none of the officers ever said "Herr Berkow" or "our chief." It seemed impossible to connect the young man's personality with this title. They always spoke of him as "Herr Arthur" or "the young gentleman." At this last question all eyes turned to Schäffer.

"He said nothing," replied Schäffer. "'I thank you, Schäffer;' that was all. He only took the papers I had carried with me for his better information and shut himself up with them. Since then I have not met him."

"I spoke with him last evening when I laid before him the demands of our miners," said the director. "He grew pale as death at the evil tidings; then he listened dumbly, not returning even a syllable. When I at length ventured upon some words of advice and comfort, thinking this would surely lead to a conversation between us, he dismissed me, saying he would prefer to consider the matter alone. Just imagine Herr Arthur considering anything! This morning I received the order to summon you all to a conference."

The old sarcastic expression again played around Schäffer's mouth.

"I fear I can tell you beforehand the result of this conference: 'Grant all, gentlemen; yield unreservedly; do what you will: only secure to me the present activity of the works!' And then he will announce to you that he and his lady are about to return to the Residence, leaving things here to go on as Heaven and Hartmann please."

"But blow on blow falls upon him now," interposed Wilberg, who chivalrously took the part of the absent. "Here even a stronger man might be overpowered."

"Yes, it is natural you would sympathize with the weak," said the chief engineer derisively. "But

of late you have shown decided sympathy for the opposite. Herr Hartmann has been enjoying your most especial friendship. Are you still an enthusiastic admirer of his?"

"For God's sake, no!" cried Wilberg with a horrified expression. "I shudder at the sight of that man now since the death of Herr Berkow."

"So do I!" said the chief engineer emphatically; "and I believe we all do. It is terrible that we must just now deal with him, but truly where there are no proofs we do best to keep silent."

"Do you really believe in the possibility of a crime?" asked Schäffer, lowering his voice. "The inquest has only established the fact that the rope was broken. It *might* have become broken of itself; whether this was really the case, Hartmann alone knows. As I said, the inquest brought nothing to light; and in any other companionship there would have been no suspicion. *He* is capable of anything."

"But, then, reflect, he too was in the same danger of losing his life. The spring with which he rescued himself was a desperate venture which one man in ten would not have dared, and in which the tenth would not have succeeded. He must have expected to also fall back and be dashed in pieces."

The chief engineer shook his head.

"You little know Ulrich Hartmann if you believe he would for a moment hesitate to risk his life if he undertook anything whereby that life was in peril. You were present when he flung himself before

those horses. At that time the whim seized him to save life; but if he wishes to destroy, it matters little to him if his own destruction threatens. That is just the dangerous thing about this man: he has no regard either for himself or others. In a case of necessity he would sacrifice himself if——"

He paused suddenly, for at this moment the young chief entered. Arthur was much changed. The deep mourning suit made his always pale face seem paler, and his forehead and eyes indicated that for these last nights he had not known sleep; still he calmly returned the greeting of the officers and came into their midst.

"I had you summoned, gentlemen, to take counsel with you in business matters which since my father's death have fallen into my hands. There is much to adjust and to change—more, perhaps, than we at first supposed. I have, as you know, hitherto stood remote from business circles, and shall not at once see my way clearly; although in these last days I have sought to do so. I reckon, therefore, in the fullest measure upon your good-will and your readiness to sustain me. I shall be obliged to lay much claim to both, and beforehand assure you of my thanks."

The gentlemen bowed, and surprise was plainly written upon all faces. The engineer threw a glance over to the director, which seemed to say, "So far that was very sensible."

"All other concerns," continued Arthur, "must recede before the momentary calamity, the danger

with which the demands of the miners and cessation of their work in case of refusal threaten us. There can be thought or mention here of but one decision."

This time it was Herr Schäffer who glanced at the engineer, as if to say, "I told you so! He yields unreservedly. Now he is going to announce to us his departure."

But the young chief seemed in no haste about this. He said, on the contrary:

"Before all things, we must inform ourselves how the men are organized and who leads them."

There was a momentary silence. Each officer hesitated to utter a name which had such fatal connection with the late accident, but at last the chief engineer said:

"Hartmann leads them, and there is no doubt that the organization is well led and perfect in all respects."

Arthur glanced thoughtfully before him.

"That I also fear; and then there will be a fight, for there can naturally be no talk of granting these demands in full."

"Naturally there can be no talk of it," repeated the engineer triumphantly, and thereby gave the signal for an exceedingly animated debate, in which he stoutly maintained his former views. Herr Schäffer, who took the opposite side no less valiantly, exerted himself by all sorts of hints and intimations, which the young chief only too well understood, to make clear to him the necessity of submission. The director took neutral ground.

He advised waiting and diplomacy. The other officers let their superiors speak for them, only now and then venturing some unimportant remark or modest opinion.

Arthur heard all silently and attentively, without taking one side or the other. But as Schäffer closed a long argument with an emphatic "*We must,*" Arthur suddenly lifted his head and spoke with such decision as to silence all other opinions.

"We *must not*, Herr Schäffer! There are other than moneyed considerations, the first of all being that of my position among the miners, which would be forever insecure if I now yielded myself to their mercy. Little as I understand such things, I see that these demands go beyond the bounds of possibility, and you must all agree with me in this. There may be wrongs and inconveniences; the workmen may have reason for complaint——"

"Ah, that they have!" interrupted the chief engineer very decidedly. "They are right in demanding examinations and repairs in the mines and an increase of wages. They may also well speak of certain alleviations and of fewer working-hours. But all beyond this is arrogant defiance, for which their leader, Ulrich Hartmann, alone is responsible. He is the leading spirit of the revolt."

"Then we will first hear him. I have already sent him word to meet us here and bring some of his comrades with him, adding that they should be received as ambassadors. They have come already. Will you call them, Herr Wilberg?"

Herr Wilberg went on his errand, but it was with open-mouthed wonder and an air which, in its expression of boundless admiration, seemed almost idiotic. Herr Schäffer elevated his eyebrows and looked at the director, who took a pinch of snuff and looked at the other gentlemen; and then they all stared together at the young chief, who had all at once begun to make arrangements and issue commands in a manner which suited none of them but the chief engineer. That gentleman had turned his back to his colleagues and placed himself at Arthur's side, as if he now knew where he really belonged.

Meantime Wilberg had returned, and close upon his footsteps followed Ulrich Hartmann, Lorenz, and another miner. But the two latter individuals, as if that were a matter of course, remained in the background, and let Hartmann advance alone.

"*Glück auf!*" was his greeting, and "*Glück auf!*" also that of his two comrades; but the tone of the old joyous miner's salutation seemed here to belie its meaning. In Ulrich's manner there had always been something lordly and defiant, but it had never seemed so arrogant, so really insulting, as to-day, when he for the first time met the chief and his officers; no more as an underling to receive directions and commands, but as an ambassador who would not lay his demands before them—no, who would dictate to them. This was, indeed, no vulgar pride which spoke from his bearing, but rather a scornful insolence rooted in the conscious-

ness of his own strength and others' weakness. He let his sullen blue eyes slowly sweep the entire circle until at last they rested upon the young chief, and his lips curled disdainfully while he silently awaited Arthur's words.

Arthur, during the conference just ended, had not sat down. He now remained standing, and gravely faced the man who, as they told him on all sides, was the prime mover in the threatened outbreak. Of that far heavier crime, that participation in his father's death, of which many accused him, the son happily had no suspicion; for with the utmost calmness he entered upon the business in hand.

"Steiger Hartmann, you yesterday through the Herr Director laid before me the demands of the miners upon my works, and in case of their not being granted you threaten a general cessation from work."

"That is so, Herr Berkow!" was the short, decided, ringing answer.

Arthur rested his hand upon the table, but his tone was cool, business-like; he betrayed not the slightest emotion.

"Above all things, I want to know what you really intend by these proceedings. This is no demand; it is a declaration of war. Even you must say to yourself that I cannot grant such things and will not grant them."

"Whether you *can* grant them I do not know, Herr Berkow," said Ulrich coolly, "but I believe

you will grant them, for we are determined to let the works lie idle until you yield to our demands. Substitutes you will not find in the whole province."

This argument was so conclusive that not much could be said against it, but the tone in which it was advanced was so disdainful that Arthur's brow grew dark.

"It is by no means my intention to refuse all your demands," he declared firmly. "There are among them some whose justice I recognize and to which I will also yield. The examination and repairs of the mines for which you ask shall be granted; the wages will, at least partially, be raised. To do this I shall be obliged to make heavy sacrifices, more perhaps than in a business point of view are justifiable at present; but it shall be done. But you must relinquish the other points, whose sole and only aim is to take the management out of the hands of my officers, to relax the discipline, which in an enterprise like this is a question of life or death."

The disdainful curl vanished from Ulrich's lips and gave place to a look of surprise and suspicion. First he glanced at the officers, then at the young chief, as if to inquire whether he had not learned all this by heart, whether he was not repeating some lesson they had stored in his memory.

"I am sorry to tell you, Herr Berkow, that these points will *not* be abandoned," he said defiantly.

"I really believe that these minor points are the

main thing with you," replied Arthur, gazing steadily at Ulrich; "but I repeat to you they *must* be abandoned. In my concessions I will go to the utmost limits of possibility, but there I stand and take no step beyond. What I concede shall and must content every one who seeks honorable, remunerative work. Whoever it does not content seeks something different, and with him no concord can be hoped for. I give you my word of honor that everything necessary for the safety of the workmen in the mines, for the raising of their wages, shall be done; and now, on my side, I demand from you confidence in my word. But before we speak of this matter you must renounce the second part of your demands. Their fulfillment is impossible and I enter into no agreement on that score."

He still retained the calm business tone, but his speech was too widely different from the usual tone and manner of the young heir not to have astonished Ulrich. He could not believe his own ears; but the more unexpectedly this opposition came from a quarter where he had confidently reckoned upon a timid, cowardly yielding, which should be but a prelude to unconditional surrender, so much the more did this opposition enrage him; and his untamable nature only too soon burst these unwonted barriers.

"But you shall not refuse in this way, Herr Berkow," said he threateningly. "There are two thousand of us, and the works are just as good as in our

hands. The time is past when we allow ourselves to be enslaved and trod upon just as it pleases you. We now demand our rights; and if we cannot win them by fair means we will take them by force."

A half-angry, half-anxious movement passed through the circle of officers. They saw that a scene was at hand which, from the well-known ungovernable temper of Ulrich, might end in violence. Arthur's face had become deep red; he advanced some steps forward and stood right before Ulrich.

"Before all things, change the tone, Hartmann, in which you speak to your chief! If you would be received here as ambassador and as such would claim a sort of equality, then behave as is customary in such transactions, and do not hurl your threats of force and insurrection into one's face. You demand discipline from your men and I demand it from you. Play the master outside with your comrades, if so it pleases you. While I stand before you I am master of these works and intend to remain so. Rely upon that!"

Had a stroke of lightning descended into that conference chamber it could have produced no greater effect than these words, hurled forth with the fullest energy and with imperious pride. The officers at first drew back and then made a movement as if to protect the young chief by forming a circle around him, but he waved them back with a silent gesture of the hand.

Both miners gazed upon him as if spell-bound; but this sudden outburst struck none so fearfully as

Ulrich. He had become white as a corpse. He stood there, leaning far forward, with trembling lips and wide-open, staring eyes, as if he could and would not comprehend what he saw and heard. Then all at once his fatal error seemed to become clear to him—his error in regard to this man, whom a few days before he had passed with a disdainful shrug of the shoulders, whom he had reckoned of no account; and now he gazed abashed into his face. Like an enraged lion he was about to spring forward, but a glance—a clear, firm, calm glance met his and awed and restrained him.

Arthur had stood immovable, but he had opened his eyes wide and full, and with these eyes he had imperiously kept that outbreaking savagery within its bounds. For a few seconds the two men gazed at each other; then all was decided between them. Slowly Ulrich's clinched hand relaxed, slowly the savage fury died out of his features, and his glance sank to the floor. He had in the young chief recognized an equal, perhaps a superior, and bowed to him.

Arthur stepped back. His voice again rang cold and calm as he continued:

"And now inform your comrades what I can grant to them and what I cannot. Add also that I will not take back a word I have said. With this, for the present, we are at an end."

"We are so!" Ulrich's voice sounded hollow, almost stifled, from inward passion. "And I declare to you, in the name of all the associated

miners upon your works, that from to-morrow these works will lie idle."

"It is well. I was prepared for this, and now I warn you once again, Hartmann, from all extreme steps. They say you have unlimited control over your comrades, so take care that quiet and order are maintained, and do not hope to intimidate me by tumultuous scenes. I and my officers will do our utmost to avoid all conflict, but still, if you force it upon us we must take sides against you, and I shall use my authority to the utmost. Spare me and yourself this."

Ulrich turned to go, but in his parting glance hatred and fury blended with something other and deeper, of which no one dreamed. What passed convulsively through the breast of this wild, passionate man none but himself could know. He had so long despised this weakling and triumphed in the thought that he also must be despised in another heart! If he there showed himself as here, then the despising was at an end. Those great brown eyes that had conquered him could well conquer something else than hatred and aversion. The livid pallor which had passed over the young miner's face since that revelation became still deeper as he withdrew.

"We will see who holds out the longest. *Glück auf!*"

He went, accompanied by both his comrades, but the men's faces showed that the scene just ended had impressed them quite differently than it had

their leader. It was a half-shy, half-deferential glance they threw back upon the young chief, and there lay something hesitating, uncertain in their manner as they left his presence.

Arthur had meantime searchingly glanced after them and now turned to the officers.

"There are two already who follow him with only half a heart. I hope the majority will come to their senses if we give them time, for now, gentlemen, we must yield to necessity and let the works lie idle. I in no way ignore the danger which threatens us here in the withdrawal of two thousand excited men with a leader like Hartmann at their head, but I am resolved to maintain my stand and not to yield until all is decided. It naturally depends upon your own free will whether you follow me here. As you were nearly all against my decision, I of course shall not force its results upon you, and willingly give leave of absence to any of you who may deem a temporary withdrawal from the works necessary."

One general indignant negative answered this proposal. The whole corps of officers, with an almost passionate eagerness, pressed around their young chief to assure him that not one of them would move from his place. Even the timid Herr Wilberg seemed all at once to have gained a lion's courage, so energetically did he join in this assurance.

"I thank you, gentlemen," said Arthur, after a deep sigh of relief. "In the afternoon we will

talk over matters and decide upon the measures to be taken. For the present I must leave you. Herr Schäffer, an hour from now I will await you in my cabinet. Once again, my thanks to you all."

When he had gone and the door closed behind him there broke loose all those emotions of astonishment, of approbation, and of anxiety which his presence had hitherto restrained.

"I tremble in all my limbs," said Herr Wilberg while, without heeding the presence of his superiors, he threw himself down upon a chair. The scene just passed had made him forgetful of all regard to etiquette. "God in heaven, what a scene! I thought that wild man, that Hartmann, would rush upon him; but that glance, that way of speaking! Who would have thought this in our chief?"

"He was too defiant, much too defiant," criticised Schäffer; but even in this criticism and in his thoughtful shake of the head lay an expression quite other from that with which he had before spoken of Arthur. "He talked as if he still had millions at his control and as if the going on of the works were not a question of life for him. His father, in spite of his haughtiness, would here have yielded unconditionally; for in a business point of view it would have been his only resource, and he knew no regard to his position and dignity. The son appears differently constituted; but this language, which would have been in place a year ago, is not so now. He should have been more circumspect, less decided in his expressions, so that

the possibility of a retreat might have been open to him in case that——"

"Away with your considerations and scruples!" interrupted the chief engineer hastily. "Pardon me, Herr Schäffer, if I speak rudely; but any one can see that your capabilities lie in office work, that you have never guided masses of laboring-men. He has hit upon just the right thing: he has impressed them; and in such cases that is all. A friendly, persuasive talk would have passed with them for weakness, an aristocratic repose for haughtiness. We must speak to these men their own language of *either* or *or*, and our chief perfectly understands this. You saw its effect upon Hartmann."

"My greatest fear is that Berkow does not fully estimate the conflict before us," said the director gravely. "Left to themselves, our miners would be content with his concessions: with this leader at their head nothing will content them. He will admit no equal, and they follow him blindly. But our chief is right. He has gone to the furthest limits of possibility. To go further would be to surrender himself, his position, and us all."

They now all spoke of "the chief," "the master," as a matter of course. In a single hour Arthur had won that title: no other designation seemed now to exist for him. He must indeed have shown himself master.

The three "ambassadors" had left the house and were walking over to the works. Ulrich spoke not a word, but Lorenz said half-aloud:

"You said lately that if a man at the right time showed us his teeth and at the right time gave us good words, then— Listen, Ulrich! I believe the man over there understands this."

Ulrich did not answer. He threw a glance up to the window, and over his forehead brooded an ominous cloud.

"And all *this* lay concealed behind those eyes that looked so heavy and dozy, as if they were good for nothing in the world but to sleep," he muttered between his set teeth. "'So long as I stand here I am master of these works!' said he; and I really believe he is the man to keep his word."

They now met a group of miners, Ulrich's own men, who surrounded the ambassadors with stormy questions.

"Let Ulrich tell you all," said Lorenz dryly. "I believe we have the wrong one to deal with there. He doesn't think of yielding."

"Don't think of yielding!" echoed the miners, all evidently disappointed. They had reckoned upon quite another decision. There were many angry exclamations, many muttered threats of vengeance against the young chief, whose name was on all sides spoken with open contempt.

"Silence!" cried Ulrich imperiously. "You do not know him as we have just seen him. I believed we should have an easy game now that the father is out of the way. In the son we have all erred. He has one trait that never belongs to weaklings— a *will*. I tell you he is going to give us plenty of trouble."

CHAPTER X.

It was early in the forenoon. Mountain and forest glowed in the sunlight and exhaled the dewy freshness of the spring morning, when Eugenie Berkow, without any attendant, rode along the forest path. She was an excellent horsewoman and passionately fond of the exercise, and yet here in the country she had seldom indulged in it—far more seldom than had been her wont. On her first arrival the weather had prevented; of late she had felt no wish for her favorite exercise; and the principal reason was that her beautiful riding-horse had been a present from Arthur in the days of their betrothal, and that her aversion to the giver extended to all that came directly from him.

It was only with repugnance that at her marriage she had worn the costly diamonds which formed part of her bridal jewels; since that day they had not left their case. It was with a feeling of constraint she moved amid the lavish magnificence that had surrounded her since her marriage, and even this splendid animal, which had cost a fabulous sum and which had called forth the admiration of the Residence as she rode out by the side of her betrothed, had of late been entirely neglected by its mistress and given over to the care of servants.

There was great surprise this morning when her ladyship ordered Afra to be saddled, but the servant, who, as usual, made ready to attend his mistress, was informed that she would ride alone; and so, to the astonishment of all, she rode forth without an attendant. Arthur of course knew nothing of this. She saw him more rarely than ever now, as he habitually excused himself from meals, and the life of this married pair had become so separate that one very rarely knew how the other passed the day.

Eugenie in rapid haste rode through the forest without meeting any one. It was very solitary here, and this solitude, the freshness and beauty of the morning, had a rare charm for the young woman, who for several days had not passed the limits of the park. The works were idle; an oppressive repose and silence brooded over this usually restless, active region; but things were all the more lively in the cabinet of the young chief, where he now remained from early morning until late at night.

The officers came and went; conferences were held, books and papers examined. Schäffer was continually passing back and forth from the Residence to the estates; letters and dispatches flew hither and thither; but over all this restless activity brooded a gloom and an oppression. It was as if an evil spirit moved in the air—a spirit to be resisted and if possible overcome.

Eugenie knew that there was a difference with the miners. Arthur had told her so, adding that

the affair was of slight consequence and would soon be adjusted. Very calmly, very coolly, he had said this to her, and had requested her in her daily walks to shun as much as possible the villages where the miners dwelt, as there was at present some excitement among the workmen.

The officers must have received hints not to alarm her ladyship, for Eugenie's attempts to learn anything further had been met by polite excuses or pacifying assurances. They had told her not to be at all anxious, that the disturbance was of little moment, that its like might be expected any day. And yet Eugenie felt the hidden danger as she felt the change which had passed over Arthur since his father's death, though his demeanor toward her remained the same.

This young woman was of too fearless, too proud a nature not to regard this reticence, this evident evasion, as a sort of offense. It was true she had no right to participation in the anxieties, perhaps dangers, of her husband; what other wives could claim lay infinitely far from her. If the word of separation was already spoken, and only for the sake of the proprieties, only to give the world as little cause for gossip as possible, they endured a few months of life together, each must surely remain foreign to the other's interests.

This she well understood, and if she had not understood it Arthur would have made her sensible of it. As he daily grew stronger and, rousing himself from his former indolence, displayed the most ener-

getic and intense activity, he grew colder and more distant to her. She could but thank him for thus seeking to alleviate for her the painfulness of the approaching separation by already treating her as an entire stranger.

Eugenie did not conceal from herself that Berkow's death had removed a great hindrance to her wishes. He would never have consented to a divorce from a marriage for which he had so ambitiously striven and which he had so dearly won. The son thought otherwise. To him the marriage was as indifferent as the wife whom in his former passive acquiescence he had allowed them to force upon him. He had proposed the separation to her before she had made the least effort to gain his consent to such a step, and in this case that step, which almost everywhere costs infinite struggle, tears, and bitterness, which not seldom stirs up the passions of the human heart from their lowest depths, was to be taken with the fullest mutual acquiescence; with such coldness, politeness, and heartlessness as to excite the wonder even of the prime movers in the affair.

Afra reared suddenly. The animal was not accustomed to the whip, at least vigorously applied as at this moment. She had to-day suffered much from the impatience of her mistress, and had Eugenie not been an adept in horsemanship, the fiery, excitable animal would have given her a world of trouble. Afra was soon quieted, but the delicate brows of her mistress were still contracted and the lips compressed

as in inward anger; whether over the resistance of Afra or the want of resistance on another side remains doubtful.

She had meantime reached the farm, which lay half an hour's distance down in the valley, and now she began to ascend the hill, but not up the steep foot-path down which she had come with Arthur and which equestrians could not pass. Not far distant a highway in long but easy windings led up the height. Afra, unaccustomed to country roads, showed both obstinacy and weariness, and when they reached the hill-top Eugenie was obliged to halt and allow the animal the needed rest.

The misty veil which had *that* day floated around hill and mountain had lifted, and sunshine warm and bright now flooded the earth, as if there had never been a time when rain and tempest had here striven for the mastery; when gray, cloudy, formless specters, like grim spirits of evil, had flitted athwart the landscape.

Still lay the valleys, misty blue in the cool morning shadows; and in all the brighter relief stood out the mountains, their countless summits, one overtopping the other, a single green forest sea, with billows rising even to the furthest, highest summit.

The dark firs had adorned themselves in light fresh green, and within upon the forest floor, outside upon the rocky ground, between moss and stones, wherever a vine could find place or a little plant take root, there bloomed and exhaled a thousand forms and colors. And the brooks dashed

down into the valleys and the rejoicing springs gushed forth, and above all arched the cloudless deep-blue sky of May. All was so bright, so golden, so vast, so free that it seemed as if this newly awakened life of Nature must heal every wound, must break every chain—as if here nothing could have breath that was not allied to freedom and happiness.

And still the glance of this young woman was strangely grave. There was a painful tension in her features, as if for her lay a hidden torture in all this surrounding beauty. She should have breathed more lightly at thought of the promised freedom which would be hers ere another spring greeted the earth. Why could she not? Why at this prospect did a sensation akin to agony thrill her soul? Could there be pain in the thought of that hour when the decree of separation would be given and received?

She longed so ardently for this separation, for a return to her family; she suffered so keenly under this chain, which she could scarce longer bear—since that hour with Arthur here upon this height she really could bear it no longer. Until then she had been firm and resigned to this sacrifice for her father, to this destiny forced upon her; fixed in her hatred to those who had forged the chain. But with that hour all her sensations seemed to have undergone a change. A conflict had begun in her inner being, a struggle against a something which, mysterious and unspoken, lay in the deepest depths of her soul and which she would for no price

allow mastery over her. And still it was this very something which had driven her out this morning, and almost against her will had driven her to this place. It alone was responsible that the daughter of the Windegs had so far forgotten etiquette as to ride out alone, without the attendance of a servant. She could and would to-day have no witness: and it was well she had none; for as she paused up there on the hill, in the midst of the golden splendor of the spring, there came over her an undefined longing for the mysterious charm of that hour when cloud and darkness were around her; when the fir tops swayed above her; when the storm raged through the ravines and valleys; when those large brown eyes, which for the first time had unveiled their depths to her, had also at that moment suggested to her that much, perhaps everything, might have been made of this man if he had loved and been beloved before his father's hand had plunged him into that whirlpool where so much of strength and nobleness has gone down to ruin.

And with this consciousness had awakened something which Eugenie Windeg had never known, something which was reserved for the wife of Arthur Berkow to experience—a woe far calmer, but infinitely deeper, than all she had hitherto suffered. And she placed her hand over her eyes, from which unrestrainedly welled forth a hot stream of tears.

"*Your ladyship!*"

Eugenie started, and Afra, frightened at the

strange voice, made a sideward spring, but the same moment a strong hand seized the rein and forced the animal to remain quiet. Ulrich Hartmann stood close beside her.

"I did not know the horse was so timid," he said apologetically, while a glance, half-anxiety, half-admiration, glided over the young horsewoman, who in spite of the surprise had remained firmly seated in her saddle.

Eugenie quickly passed her hand over her face to remove the traces of tears, but it was too late. Her weeping must necessarily have been seen, and the thought of this sent a deep flush to her cheeks and gave her voice an expression of displeasure as she hastily and somewhat imperiously said:

"Let go the rein! Afra is not accustomed to be held by strangers and shies at every unknown touch. You are bringing me into danger by your nearness."

Ulrich listened and stepped back. Eugenie stroked caressingly the neck of the animal, which, snorting and impatient, had endured the strange hand at its bridle, whose power it, as it were, in a moment recognized. But the caresses of her mistress in a few seconds pacified Afra.

Meantime Hartmann's gaze rested unwavering upon the young woman, who sat her horse as few women could have done. The dark riding-dress, the little hat with its gossamer veil surmounting the blond braids and shading the beautiful face still red from weeping, the easy, secure bearing which in

spite of Afra's unrest was not for a moment disturbed, showed in the fullest light the symmetry of the tall, slender figure. Her whole appearance as, with the sunbeams weaving a bright woof all around her, she sat on the back of the beautiful animal, was a perfect picture of strength and grace.

"Have you been long up here, Hartmann?" asked Eugenie, in the faint hope that he might have reached the hill just at the moment of speaking to her and not have seen her tears. "I did not see you before."

"I stood over there." He pointed to the outlet of the forest, which she had not noticed. "I saw you ride up and remained to wait for you."

The young woman, who was just about to ride past him into the wood, halted in surprise.

"To wait for me?" she repeated. "And wherefore?"

Ulrich evaded an answer.

"Are you alone, my lady—*quite* alone? Have you not as usual a servant with you?"

"No: you see that I am without any attendant."

Ulrich stepped quickly, but this time more circumspectly than before, to the horse's side.

"Then you must turn back this instant! I will go with you, at least until we come in sight of the works."

"But what is the meaning of all this?" asked Eugenie, more and more struck by the proffered service and by the dark, contracted brow of the young miner. "Is there danger here in the forest, or is there anything else to fear?"

Ulrich threw a scrutinizing glance upon the lower forest path, whose windings from here were only partially visible. "We were at the forges up in the mountains," he at length said slowly, "I and a part of my comrades. I went alone by the nearest path, because I wished to return sooner. The others took the highway. You might meet them, your ladyship, and I would rather be near you, at all events."

"I am not timid," declared Eugenie decidedly, "and I should hope they would not dare insult me. I know that there is a difference with the workmen, but they tell me it is of small moment, and in a short time all will be adjusted."

"Then they have lied to you!" interrupted Ulrich roughly. "Of adjustment and of trifles there can be no mention here. Herr Berkow has declared war upon us or we upon him—it all amounts to the same thing; enough, we are now at war, and it will not end until one of us is conquered. I say this to your ladyship, and I certainly know best about the matter."

A slight pallor overspread the young woman's face as she received this confirmation of her long-cherished fears, but the reckless, overbearing manner of the revelation offended her and gave her a more than usually haughty manner as she replied coldly:

"Well, then, if matters stand thus I cannot possibly accept the attendance, and still less the protection, of a man who so openly and recklessly con-

fesses himself the enemy of my husband. I will ride alone."

She was about to give her horse the rein, but Ulrich started up at this motion and passionately and imperiously threw himself in the way.

"Stop, my lady! You must take me with you."

"I *must?*" Eugenie proudly lifted her head. "And supposing I will not?"

"Then I implore you to do so."

There was again that quick transition from reckless threatening to almost piteous entreaty which had once before disarmed Eugenie's anger and which even now softened her displeasure. She glanced down upon the young miner, who sullenly, angrily, and yet with an expression of unmistakable anxiety gazed up to her.

"I cannot accept your proffer, Hartmann," she said gravely. "If your comrades have gone so far that in meeting them I am not secure from insult, I fear this is alone your work; and from a man who bears such an irreconcilable hatred against us——"

"*Us?*" interrupted Ulrich vehemently. "I do not hate you, gracious lady, and you should not be insulted, certainly not *you!* No one ventures to breathe a word against you when I am near, and if one did venture he would not do so a second time. Take me with you?"

For a few moments Eugenie hesitated, but her fearlessness and his hostile demonstrations just now turned the scale.

"I will turn around and show the highway," she

said hastily. "Remain back, Hartmann! Respect for Herr Berkow demands it."

As if this name unfettered a long-restrained fury, his eyes flamed suddenly up as she spoke it and a flash of wild, deadly hatred shot from them.

"Respect to Herr Berkow!" he broke loose—"Herr Berkow, who so lovingly lets you ride alone when he knew that we were up at the forges and must now be in the forest! Indeed, he has never concerned himself about you; whether you are happy or unhappy is all the same to him; and still he only is responsible for all!"

"Hartmann! how dare you?" cried Eugenie, glowing with anger and indignation, but she vainly sought to restrain him. He interrupted her words and in ever-mounting excitement went on:

"Ah, yes! it is certainly a great crime to see you weep when you think no mortal is near; but I believe you weep very often, my lady; that you have wept very often since coming here; only no one sees it as I did just now. I know whose fault it is, and I will——"

He stopped suddenly, for the young woman had raised herself in the saddle and now gave him that glance of annihilating pride with which she knew how to make herself so unapproachable. Her voice sounded sharp and icy, and still worse, it was the tone of the mistress to the underling with which she now commanded him.

"Be silent, Hartmann! Another word, one single word, against my husband, and I forget that

you saved his life and mine and answer your thrust as it deserves!"

She wheeled her horse around and would have passed him, but Ulrich's giant form stood in the midst of the path and would not move one step. He had become ghastly pale at this imperious tone, which for the first time he heard from her lips, and the hatred which flamed in his eyes seemed now also for her.

"Stand out of my way!" commanded Eugenie imperiously as before. "I wish to go on!"

But she found herself in the presence of a man with whom commanding could not avail and whom a command from her mouth roused to perfect fury. Instead of obeying, with a single step he was close at her side, and a second time, now with an iron grasp, he seized her horse's bridle, regardless of the animal's rearing or of the danger of its mistress.

"You shall not speak to me in this way, my lady!" he said in a hollow voice. "I can endure much, much from *you*, if from no one else; but that tone I will not bear! Do not goad on your horse," he continued, beside himself as Eugenie sought by the use of the whip to force Afra to break loose and spring forward. "You will not ride me down, but I will pull down this horse as I did those others!"

There lay a fearful threat in these words and a still more fearful threat in his glance. Eugenie saw this savagery so feared by all for the first time turned against her, and she suddenly comprehended the full danger of her situation. But at the same

moment with quick presence of mind she seized the only means of rescue.

"Hartmann," she said reproachfully, but her voice had all at once become mild, almost weak, "just now you offered me your protection, and do you yourself threaten me? Well, truly, I see what I have to fear from your comrades if *you* meet me thus! I would not have ridden into the forest if I had had a suspicion of this."

The reproach and, more yet, the voice, seemed to bring Ulrich to his senses; his wild fury vanished when he no longer heard the tone which called it forth. Still he kept his right hand firmly on the rein, but the clinched left gradually relaxed and the threatening expression vanished from his features.

"I have hitherto never feared you," continued Eugenie gently, "in spite of all the bad things I have heard them say of you. Will you now teach me to fear you? We are close to the declivity of the hill; if you go on so, exciting my horse, or continue your threats, an accident will happen. Will the man who once threw himself under my horses' hoofs to rescue an unknown person now himself bring me into danger? Let me go on, Hartmann!"

Ulrich slightly trembled and threw a glance upon the declivity, which certainly was near enough. Slowly he let go the bridle, and slowly, as if yielding to an irresistible power, he stepped to one side to let her pass. Eugenie involuntarily looked back. He stood there dumb, the scornful eyes upon the ground, and without a syllable of reply or adieu let her unhindered ride on.

CHAPTER XI.

The young woman drew a deep sigh of relief as Afra's fleetness removed her from that dangerous presence. Courageous as she was, here she had trembled. She could have been no woman not to have been taught by this scene what she had long suspected—that this enigmatical and contradictory being, this man so different from all others, concealed some sentiment in regard to her far more dangerous than hatred. Still he bowed to her power; but he had been near enough breaking his chain. She had now proof that this untamable nature yielded nothing to blindness or timidity, and that once unfettered it burst all barriers.

She had reached the valley, and mindful of the warning she had received was about leaving the highway, when she heard the sound of hoofs in that direction, and looking around saw a horseman coming on at full gallop. In a few minutes he was at her side.

"*At last!*" said Arthur breathlessly as he let his horse fall into step with hers. "How very imprudent in you to ride out to-day! You certainly had no suspicion of the risk."

Eugenie gazed in surprise at her husband, who,

glowing and breathless from his hurried ride, kept close at her side. He was not in riding-costume; he wore neither spurs nor gloves; just as he was, in his house dress, he must have thrown himself upon the horse to hasten after her.

"Only half an hour ago I learned of this caprice of yours," he continued, trying to control his excitement. "Franz and Anton are already seeking you in different directions; I alone found the right track. They told me at the farm that you had some time ago ridden past."

The young wife did not ask the reason of this anxiety; she knew it sufficiently; but still the anxiety itself surprised her. He could have sent his servants alone to seek her. Indeed, the possibility of having his wife insulted by the miners was very unpleasant for the chief of the works, and the only peculiarity in the case was that he hurried after her himself.

"I was above there," explained Eugenie, pointing to the goal of her ride.

"Upon the hill where we sought refuge from the storm! Were you *there?*"

Eugenie blushed deeply; she saw again that strange uplighting in his eyes which for a week long had vanished. And why was the question so wildly, so breathlessly expressed? Had he not long ago forgotten that hour which so often still tortured her remembrance?

"I happened there by accident," said she hastily, as if she must exculpate herself from a fault, and

this exculpation had at once the desired result. The uplighting in his glance vanished suddenly and his manner became cool and decided.

"By accident—ah, yes; I might have known that you would plan no such excursion. Afra, I see, was unwilling. But you might accidentally have taken the road to M——, and that was what I feared."

"And what was there to fear?" asked Eugenie as they left the wide traveled road and turned off into a narrower one leading through the forest.

Arthur tried to shun her searching glance.

"You might have encountered some disrespect or insult," he said. "Our miners have been to the upper forges to organize there some resistance to my authority. Hartmann, by his fulminating addresses, has excited them to fury. I hear of great commotions up there yesterday, and I know that a band of men coming from the scene of such a tumult is capable of anything. They must now be on the return."

"But I should have shunned the highway," said the young woman calmly. "I was already warned."

"Warned? By whom?"

"By Hartmann himself, who a quarter of an hour ago I met up in the forest."

This time it was Arthur's horse that reared violently, frightened at the sudden wrench his rider had given to the bridle.

"Hartmann? And did he dare approach you and speak to you after all that has happened in these last days?"

"It was only to warn me and to offer me his company and his protection. I declined both; that I believed I owed to you and to your position."

"You believed you owed it to me?" repeated Arthur sarcastically. "I am infinitely obliged to you for this deference, but it is well you showed it; for if you had let him escort you, much as I avoid giving the first occasion for conflict, still I should have made him sensible that the inciter, the ringleader, of this whole rebellion had best keep his distance from my wife."

Eugenie was silent. In spite of this apparent calmness, she knew that her husband was fearfully excited; she knew this by the compression of the lips, by the trembling of the hand; just so she had seen him on that first evening, only she now better than then knew what lay concealed behind this outward indifference.

They rode silently on through the sunny wood, the sound of the horses' hoofs being subdued on this soft mossy floor. Here over all was spring's perfume and spring's breath; here, too, the clear blue sky which had arched over the fir tops; and here, also, the secret woe in Eugenie's heart, only that it rose mightier, more agonizing than there upon the hill.

The animals trotted side by side along the narrow road. The heavy folds of Eugenie's riding-habit swept the bushes, and her veil more than once fluttered over Arthur's shoulder. In such nearness

she could but remark that now, when the glow of the rapid ride had vanished, he was ghastly pale. It is true he had never had the fresh animated glow of youth, but this was quite another pallor from that of the young lion of the Residence who had passed his evenings in the *salon*, his nights at the gaming-table, and then, satiated and debilitated, had lain all day upon his sofa with closed curtains because the spoiled, weary eyes could not bear the sunlight. This pallor came from the same source as that gloomy fold of care upon the forehead, as the grave, melancholy expression of the face, which had hitherto shown only languid indifference.

But Arthur Berkow gained infinitely by this change, which would have been detrimental to any other. Eugenie now began to see that her husband could make pretensions to beauty.

Until now she would not see this; that sluggish insensibility of his nature had robbed him of every outward grace. Now this new expression of energy in face and manner made him quite another being.

Ah, yes! the sunken world began to mount upward from its abyss; the approaching storm had summoned it forth, the storm which alone—Eugenie felt almost with a sort of bitterness that she had no share in this awakening; that she did not possess the magic word to loose the spell. It burst upward through its own strength: what need was there of a helping hand!

"I am sorry to be obliged to shorten your ride," said Arthur at length, interrupting the silence, but

he said this in the cool, polite manner he always assumed toward her. "The day is charming."

"I fear a ride out in the open air was more necessary to you than to me." In the young wife's voice there lay an anxiety of which she was not conscious. "You look so pale, Arthur!"

"I am not accustomed to work," he said in a tone of bitter irony. "This all comes from effeminacy. I cannot even for a short time perform the labor my officers do daily."

"It seems to me, on the contrary, that you are working beyond what is required of any one," returned Eugenie hastily. "All day long you scarce leave your cabinet, and nights I see your light burning there until morning."

A quick flush passed over the young man's face.

"For how long a time have you so attentively scrutinized the windows of my apartment?" he asked with calm but intense bitterness. "I did not believe they really had any existence for you."

It was now the young woman's turn to blush, but she quickly subdued the mounting glow and returned firmly:

"Since I knew that the danger which you persistently denied every day drew nearer. Why did you conceal from me the magnitude of this conflict and its possible results?"

"Because I did not wish to alarm you."

She made an impatient gesture.

"I am no timid child whom one must surround with such anxious care, and if any danger threatens us——"

"*Us?*" interrupted Arthur. "I beg your pardon, but the danger threatens me alone. I have never thought to treat you as a child, but I considered it my duty not to enlighten the Baroness Windeg in regard to matters which must be indifferent to her, and which in a short time will be as foreign from her as the name she now bears."

The tone of the reply was icy cold, and it was her own tone, the one she had often enough used toward him when she felt it necessary to impress him with her high rank and the compulsory nature of her marriage to him. Now he gave her a lesson with it. In the dark eyes of the young woman flashed something like scorn as she fixed them upon her husband.

"And so you deny me all information in regard to your affairs?"

"If you wish it—no."

Eugenie seemed for some moments to struggle with herself.

"Have you refused your miners their demands?" she asked at last.

"What I could grant and what the workmen of themselves asked I have granted. With Hartmann's extreme demands I can do nothing. Their necessary consequences, if granted, would be the subversion of all discipline. They would end in anarchy; and then they are really insulting. He would hardly have dared make them had he not known what I have at stake in this contest."

"And what have you at stake?" asked Eugenie in breathless suspense—"your fortune?"

"More still—my life!"

"And you will not yield?"

"*No!*"

In dumb surprise the young wife gazed at her husband, at this man who only three months ago could endure no "scene" with her because it affected his nerves, and who with such composure bared his brow to a conflict in which his very life was at stake. Was he really the same? It had an iron ring, this "*No;*" and she felt that with just as iron a will he would oppose the wildest threats of the miners.

"I fear that Hartmann will pursue the quarrel to extremities," she replied. "He hates you."

Arthur's lips curled in a disdainful smile.

"I know it," he said. "The sentiment is mutual."

Eugenie thought of those wild, flaming eyes when upon the hill she had mentioned her husband's name, and a sudden anguish came over her.

"You should not underrate this man's hatred, Arthur. He is terrible in his passion as in his energy."

Arthur gave her a sullen glance.

"Do you know him so well? But a little while ago you thought this blouse hero worthy of your admiration. A low, worthless energy—that which scorns impossibilities and would rather drag hundreds into ruin than listen to a word of reason; but even Hartmann may find a wall against which his stubborn obstinacy will beat in vain. He will force nothing from me. I will fight the battle through, even to my own overthrow."

Suddenly he reined in his horse, and Eugenie did the same. The forest road here intersected a winding of the highway, and in this they saw what they especially wished to avoid—a crowd of miners who had halted and seemed to await something. Arthur frowned.

"It seems that we cannot avoid a meeting."

"Shall we turn around?" asked Eugenie in a low voice.

"Too late! They have already remarked us. We cannot avoid them; to turn around would be flight. It is a pity we are on horseback; that will enrage them still more. But we must here show no signs of weakness; we must go on."

"And yet you have feared this meeting!"

"Not for myself, but for you. Now it cannot be avoided; but you at least are not alone. Hold Afra tight in rein and remain close by my side. Perhaps we may pass without trouble."

These words were softly and quickly exchanged during scarce a minute's halt. Now they rode slowly onward and passed out into the high-road.

Arthur was right. The manner of meeting could scarce have been worse. The workmen were in an excited condition, inflamed and imbittered by the scene just passed at the forges. They had already begun to suffer from the results of their opposition, and now they saw their chief, who would not yield to their demands, mounted on horseback by the side of his high-born wife, as they thought returning from a pleasure ride—a dangerous sight for

men already struggling against starvation. A low muttering became audible, followed by half-uttered threats and insulting words. They subsided as the two reached the highway, but the whole throng, as with one consent, formed in a dense mass to prevent the riders' passage.

Arthur's lips again showed that slight nervous quiver which with him was the only outward token of excitement, but his hand did not tremble in the least as he grasped Afra's bridle, in any event to keep the animal close to himself.

"*Glück auf!*"

The greeting remained unanswered. Not a single one of the whole throng returned it. Instead, hostile glances upon both darted from all sides, and those standing nearest pressed still more closely forward.

"Will you not let us pass?" asked Arthur gravely. "The horses will become restless if you crowd so. Make way!"

In spite of the danger of the situation, which she fully comprehended, Eugenie gazed in astonishment at her husband. It was the first time she had heard this tone from his lips; it rang very calm, but it had none the less the full authority of the master to his underlings. This demeanor of Arthur's, though certainly venturesome at such a moment, would have proved an absolute success if the crowd had been without a leader. But now all eyes turned in one direction, as if from there alone they expected the signal for obedience or opposition. Up

yonder stood Ulrich Hartmann, who had just come down from the hill, and whom they evidently were awaiting here. He stood immovable, his arms crossed, his eyes fixed upon Berkow and his wife; but there was nothing good in the expression of these eyes.

Arthur's glance had followed the others. He now turned quite around.

"Hartmann," he said, "are you leader to-day? Well, see that your men let us pass. We are waiting."

Had there been in these words the slightest trace of a command or an entreaty, no matter which, they would have been as a spark in a powder-keg; and Ulrich, indeed, seemed only to await this spark. But this cool request for him to give orders here, assuming this to be his self-evident duty, and at the same time recognizing his authority, impressed without offending him. He came slowly forward.

"Ah! I see you wish to ride on, Herr Berkow."

"Certainly. We wish to pass over to the other side of the road."

An annihilating hatred flamed up in Ulrich's eyes.

"And do you call me here to win you this favor? You are master of your works and your workmen: command them to give place to you. Or"—here his voice again became hollow and threatening—"perhaps you *now* believe that *I* am master here—that I need only speak a word to prove it to you?"

Eugenie had become very pale as she urged her

horse closer to her husband's side. She knew that those flashing eyes did not threaten her: it was not for herself she trembled. Now courage failed her to try the might of that power before which Ulrich himself had bowed. She felt that this power would be without avail while he saw her at her husband's side.

"A hundred are always masters against one," said Arthur coolly. "I cannot think you mean to kill me, Hartmann. Would you not feel safe if, at this moment, you accidentally found yourself in the presence of my officers? I think I am safe here—safe as in my own house."

Ulrich gave no answer. He looked sullenly at the young man, who with perfect repose halted before him and with those clear brown eyes gazed at him unwaveringly, as when the quarrel first broke out. At that time, it is true, he had stood in his conference chamber surrounded and protected by his officers; now he found himself alone, in the midst of an excited mob, who only waited the signal to break loose upon him with insult, perhaps violence; and still not a muscle of his face quivered, still his bearing was proud and secure, his glance fearless, as if he knew and felt himself master even here.

Such calmness and fearlessness did not fail of their impression upon this throng, accustomed to obedience. The only question remained, Whom should they now obey? For the second time they turned inquiringly to Ulrich, who still stood there

silent. He looked up, then aside to the pale face of Eugenie. All at once he stepped back.

"Make way there," he said, "so that the horses can pass. There to the left."

The command was at once obeyed, with an alacrity which showed that the men obeyed it not unwillingly. In less than a minute the way was open and Berkow and his wife rode on unhindered. At the other side of the highway they again took the forest road and immediately vanished between the trees.

"Listen, Ulrich"—with a sort of good-natured reproach Lorenz stepped up to his comrade—"just now you flew at me because up at the forges I spoke of peace. What have you done now?"

Ulrich still stared over to the forest. Now, when the presence of the chief no longer influenced him, he seemed to regret his sudden magnanimous impulse.

"'A hundred against one!'" muttered he bitterly, "and 'I am safe in your midst!' Ah, yes; fine speeches never fail them when they are afraid; and such as we keep biting away at the old bait."

"He did not look as if he was afraid," said Lorenz decidedly. "He is not at all like his father. Ulrich, we had better——"

"What had we better do?" interrupted Ulrich angrily. "Give in, had we? So that you can only once more have peace and quiet and he carry things with a higher hand than even his father when he sees that all goes well with him. If I let

him go to-day, it was because he was not alone—because he had his wife with him, and because——"

He broke off suddenly. The proud, reticent man would sooner have bitten off his tongue than let his comrade know what power had forced him to spare the man he hated.

Meantime Arthur and Eugenie had ridden on in silence. As if the danger just past had drawn them nearer, they still let their horses keep close together and Arthur still held Afra's bridle, although there was nothing more to fear; and this precaution in case of so excellent a horsewoman as Eugenie was quite superfluous.

"Now you comprehend the danger of your to-day's excursion?" he asked at length.

"Yes; but also the danger of your position."

"I must bear it. You have yourself seen what blind obedience this Hartmann knows how to enforce. A word from him and they let us ride on unhindered; not a single one dared murmur, and yet they were all only waiting a signal from him to turn against us."

"But he did not give the signal," said Eugenie.

Arthur again fixed upon her that long, lowering gaze.

"No, not *to-day*. He best knows what restrained him. But he will to-morrow, day after to-morrow, if we chance to meet again. I am quite certain of that."

At the outlet of the forest they spurred their horses to a quicker trot, and in a quarter of an hour

reached the terrace of the country-house. Arthur swung himself from the saddle. How light and elastic were his movements in comparison with his former sluggish ways! He extended his hand to help down his wife, but the pallor upon her face had deepened; she trembled slightly as he placed his arm around her, and this trembling grew more violent as his arms held her a moment longer than ever before when he had offered her such assistance.

"Were you frightened?" asked he softly as he took her arm to conduct her into the house.

Eugenie gave no answer. Ah, yes! she had passed through deathly anguish at that scene; but she would sooner have borne to be deemed cowardly by him than let him suspect that she had trembled for his sake. And still a suspicion of this seemed to dawn upon him.

"Were you frightened, Eugenie?" repeated he. His voice sounded so tender, so subdued, and he drew her arm closer and closer to his breast. She lifted her eyes to him: there it was again—that deep, magical uplighting of his, only more glowing, more treacherous than she had ever before seen; and he bent close down to her so as not to lose a syllable of her answer.

"Arthur, I——"

"The Herr Baron Windeg and his eldest son arrived half an hour ago," reported a servant, hastily coming to meet them; and the announcement was scarce made, when the young baron ap-

peared and, with all the fire of his eighteen years, rushed down the step to greet his sister, whom he had not seen since her marriage.

"Ah, Curt! is it you?" The young woman felt almost a spasm of pain at the arrival of her father and brother, for which, under other circumstances, she had so longed. At the moment when the name Windeg was spoken Arthur let fall her hand. She saw how icy cold were his features and heard how icy cold were the tones of his voice as with distant politeness he saluted his brother-in-law.

"Will you not accompany us?" asked Eugenie as he paused at the foot of the stairs.

"Pardon me if I beg you to receive your father alone. I had—forgotten something, and it has just come to my mind. I will as soon as possible pay my respects to the baron."

He stepped back, while Eugenie and her brother ascended the stairs without him. The brother appeared to be somewhat surprised, but a glance at his sister's pale face bade him repress the questions that already trembled on his lips. He could very well imagine how matters stood. Had this *parvenu*, on the ride, been indulging in new insults to his sister? The young baron hurled down a threatening glance to his brother-in-law, and then, with a fresh outburst of tenderness, he said to his sister:

"Eugenie, I am so delighted to see you again; and you?"

The young woman forced a smile.

"I, too, am delighted to see you, Curt, inexpress-

ibly delighted!" At the same moment she glanced down into the vestibule, but it was empty: Arthur had left already. She drew herself up in wounded pride. "Let us go to father," she said; "he is waiting."

CHAPTER XII.

Among all the dwellers upon the Berkow estates, there was perhaps only a single one who took this sudden and violent quarrel between the chief and his workmen from any other than its threatening side; and this one was Herr Wilberg. In the blond head of this young officer lay concealed so much extravagant and high-flown romance that he could not help regarding the danger of the situation and the bitter dissensions which at any moment might result in a catastrophe as in the highest degree interesting.

In truth, his admiration for Ulrich Hartmann had been entirely transferred to the young chief since he had stepped to the helm of affairs and grasped the reins with a firmness none would have believed possible from a hand that had seemed so weak. The newly developed energy with which Arthur had endeavored to make himself at home in this new field, and to stem the tide of losses and dangers breaking in upon him from all sides, demanded in the highest degree the support of the upper officers: the younger official gentlemen, whose duties for the time were for the most part at an end, were enjoying an unwelcome repose; and Herr Wilberg employed this in nursing his sup-

posed passion for her ladyship and imagining himself as unhappy as possible.

To tell the truth, the latter became somewhat difficult to him as, upon the whole, he found himself very comfortable in this hopeless passion. To appear poetic in his eyes, a love must needs be unhappy: with a happy love he really would not have known what to do. This distant adoration perfectly suited him, and he found abundant opportunities to yield himself up to it, as he seldom or never approached its object.

Since that day when he had accompanied her ladyship through the park he had spoken to her but once. At an accidental meeting Eugenie had sought from him more exact information as to the significance of the strike which had broken out among the mines. But Herr Berkow had given strict directions to his officers not in any manner to excite the anxiety of his wife, and Wilberg obeyed so far as to keep silence in regard to the present position of affairs.

And yet he could not avoid describing as minutely as possible the scene which had taken place in the conference chamber between her husband and Hartmann, and as he must needs revel in the romantic, this scene in his mouth assumed such a dramatic interest, and the young chief, with his suddenly awakened energy, grew to such an heroic personage, that it was incomprehensible how the description could so entirely fail in its effect.

Eugenie certainly had listened with breathless

interest, but she had become noticeably pale and strangely silent during the whole recital; and at its conclusion the narrator awaited in vain for an expression from her lips. Without the least allusion to the subject she politely thanked him and then coolly dismissed him; and the young man went away in the highest degree astonished and somewhat wounded at her want of sympathy.

And even her ladyship had no sense of the poesy of such a situation. Or had she, perhaps, failed in appreciating this because her husband was the hero? Any other would have triumphed in the thought; but Wilberg's poetic fancies, so long indulged, had subverted all natural emotions. He was wounded because the eloquent description, *his* description, had so entirely failed in its effect. He already felt something of that glacial atmosphere which the chief engineer had spoken of as surrounding her ladyship. She all at once became so high, so distant, so unapproachable that the most he could have expected of her was a polite dismissal. He must still believe this and worship her unconditionally or imagine himself a very commonplace, unimportant person; and to imagine such a thing would have been impossible to Herr Wilberg.

Absorbed in thought, he had approached the overseer's dwelling, and as he usually looked neither to the right nor left, on the bridge he ran against a young lady just coming down the hill. With a low cry she sprang to one side to avoid the shock, and Wilberg now, for the first time seeing her, stammered an embarrassed apology.

"I beg your pardon, Fräulein Melanie," he said. "I did not see you. I was so lost in thought that I paid no attention to anything around me."

Fräulein Melanie was the daughter of the chief engineer, whose house the young officer sometimes visited; but his thoughts, as may be supposed, took so high a flight that he paid little attention to this girl of sixteen years, who certainly possessed a graceful figure, a pretty face, and a pair of roguish eyes. But there was nothing romantic about her. Such girls were far from being poetic enough for Herr Wilberg, and as for Melanie, she had never troubled herself much about the blond young officer, who seemed rather tiresome to her, and who now by a few polite words deemed it necessary to atone for his involuntary rudeness.

"You seem just returning from a walk, fräulein," he said. "Did you go far?"

"Oh, no! not at all far. Papa has forbidden me long walks and does not like to have me go out alone. Tell me, Herr Wilberg, is there really so much danger from our miners?"

"Danger? What makes you think of that?" asked Wilberg diplomatically.

"Well, I do not know; but papa is so grave sometimes that it makes me sad and anxious. He has already spoken of sending mamma and me to visit in the city."

The young man put on a lugubrious face.

"The times are serious, fearfully serious, Fräulein Melanie," he said. "I cannot blame your father

for seeking security for his wife and daughter, while we must stand and fight to the last man."

"To the last man!" cried the young girl in horror. "For God's sake! my poor papa!"

"Well, I am only speaking figuratively," said Wilberg soothingly. "We need have no fear of personal danger, and even should it come to that, the age of our chief engineer, his duties as a husband and father, exclude him. We younger ones must step into the breach."

"And *you* too!" asked Melanie with a somewhat distrustful glance.

"Certainly, Fräulein Melanie. I first of all."

Herr Wilberg, who, to give more emphasis to this declaration, had solemnly laid his hand upon his heart, all at once sprang backward and hastily retreated over to the other side of the road, where with equal celerity Melanie followed him. Close behind them stood the giant figure of Hartmann. He had come over the bridge unremarked, and a disdainful smile now overspread his face as he noticed the terror of the two young people.

"You need not be so frightened, Herr Wilberg," he said. "I shall not harm you."

The young officer seemed to feel the ludicrousness of his sudden retreat and to see that as companion and protector of a young girl a different demeanor was required of him. He hastily recalled his courage, and placing himself right before the terrified Melanie, with something of firmness he said:

"I cannot believe, Hartmann, that you will attack us here on the open street."

"The officers all appear to believe as much," said Ulrich derisively. "As soon as they catch a glimpse of me they run off as if I were a highway robber. Only Herr Berkow acts otherwise." In Hartmann's voice there was an envenomed tone, as if he could not calmly speak that hated name. "Even if I had the whole herd of miners behind me he would defy me."

"Herr Berkow and her ladyship are the only ones in the whole works who suspect nothing," said Wilberg unguardedly.

"Who suspect nothing about what?" asked Ulrich morosely, and slowly turning his eyes upon Wilberg.

Whether the young officer was enraged by this merciless irony of himself and his colleagues or whether he thought it necessary to play the hero in Melanie's presence, we cannot say. However this may be, he had a sudden spasm of courage, such as not seldom drives timid natures to extremes, and returned hastily:

"We do not run from you, Hartmann, because you stir up the workmen to revolt and make all understanding with them impossible: certainly not for that. But we go out of your way because"—here he lowered his voice so that Melanie could not understand the words—"because the rope broke when you were coming up with Herr Berkow. If you must know, this is why all shun you."

The words were very thoughtless, very bold certainly, for a man like Wilberg; and he had little dreamed of their effect. Ulrich started back with a repressed yet fearful cry of rage, but at the same moment his face became white as that of a corpse. The threateningly clinched fist sank and convulsively clutched at the iron trellis-work of the bridge. With throbbing breast, with set teeth, he stood there; and his glance flashed down upon the man before him as if it would annihilate him with one lightning stroke.

This was too severe a trial for the courage of the two young people. They did not know which ran first, carrying along the other; but they both ran with all possible speed, and not until several houses lay between them and the man they feared, and they were sure that he was not following, did they moderate their pace.

"For Heaven's sake, what was it you said to that horrible man—that Hartmann—that so excited him?" asked Melanie tremblingly. "What temerity to enrage him so!"

The young man smiled, although it was with white lips. It was the first time in his life that he had been reproached with temerity, and he was conscious of having in the fullest measure deserved the reproach. Now he saw the whole magnitude of his venture.

"My pride as an officer was wounded—it was my duty to guard you, fräulein. You see that in consequence of my words he did not venture near us."

"No; we ran away at the right time," said Melanie naïvely. "And it was fortunate we did so. He would have killed us if we had not."

"I ran away for your sake," returned Wilberg sensitively. "Alone, I would in any event have withstood him, even if it had cost me my life."

"But that would have been *so* sad," remarked the young lady. "You make such pretty verses!"

Wilberg blushed in the most delighted surprise.

"Do you know my verses?" he asked. "I did not suppose that in your house—your father is somewhat prejudiced against my poetical bent."

"Yes, papa was a little while ago speaking to the director about it," said Melanie; and then she stopped suddenly. She could not tell the young poet that her father, with the most cutting irony and malicious comments, had read to his colleague the verses which to her sixteen-year-old tastes seemed so touching and beautiful; that he at last had thrown the sheet upon the table with the words: "And in such foolery as this the man passes his time."

She had thought this ridicule in the highest degree unjust to Herr Wilberg, who had ceased to be tiresome to her now that she had learned of that unhappy love which pervaded and inspired his verses. This explained and excused all his peculiarities. She hastened to assure him that for her part she found his poetry delightful, and somewhat timidly, yet in the most sympathetic manner, she began to console him for his supposed misfortune.

Herr Wilberg allowed himself to be consoled. He found it agreeable beyond description to have met at last a being who understood him, and far more agreeable to receive her consolations.

Both young people deeply regretted having so soon reached the engineer's dwelling, and it was with real unhappiness that they saw this gentleman, in his own exalted person, standing at a window and gazing at them with critical, astonished glances.

Wilberg had no desire to encounter the inevitable raillery of his superior if Melanie should incidentally happen to allude to the meeting with Hartmann and their running away from him as if on a wager. He therefore parted from the young girl with the assurance that she had dropped balsam into his heart, and Melanie tripped up the stairs racking her brains as to who might be the object of the young officer's interesting but unhappy passion.

In the dwelling of Overseer Hartmann the old man sat at a table, his head buried in his hands. Not far from him, at a window, stood Lorenz and Martha as Ulrich opened the sitting-room door. At his entrance the conversation of the three stopped so suddenly that the young miner must have supposed that he had been its subject.

But, not seeming to notice, he closed the door behind him, and without word or greeting threw himself into the great arm-chair by the stove.

"*Glück auf!*" said the overseer, turning to him. "Do you no longer think it worth your while to give us greeting?"

"Do not annoy me, father!" burst out Ulrich impatiently, again throwing back his head and pressing his hand against his forehead.

The overseer shrugged his shoulders and turned away. Martha left her place by the window and sat down by her uncle to resume the work she had dropped in her conversation with Lorenz. For some moments an oppressive silence reigned in the room. At last Lorenz stepped up to Ulrich and said:

"Steiger Wilms has been here to speak with you, Ulrich, and will return in an hour. He has been all over the neighboring works."

Ulrich started up, passing his hand over his forehead as if he would chase away a tormenting dream.

"Well, how is it?" he asked; but the question seemed half-mechanical, as if he could not quite recall the subject of conversation.

"They are all going to join us," said Lorenz. "Our taking the lead seems to have given them courage. There is rebellion everywhere. The upper forges are to begin, and the other works to follow unless all their demands are immediately granted, and that is not to be thought of. In a week the mines and forges of the whole district will stop."

"*At last!*" Ulrich sprang up as if electrified. His absence and dreaming had all at once vanished. The whole elasticity of the man had returned. "At last!" he repeated with a deep breath. "It was indeed time. They have long enough left us alone."

"Because we alone took the lead."

"That may be, but we could not wait. Things here were not as in the other works. Every day brought the Berkows a step forward and us a step backward. Is Wilms over at the villages? He must immediately tell this to his comrades. It will give them courage."

"They need something to give them courage," said the overseer gravely. "Not a stroke of work has been done for a fortnight. You wait and wait for a concession, for a compromise at least, which in your opinion must come, and yet you wait in vain. The officers shun you and the master does not look as if he would yield an inch. I tell you, Ulrich, 'tis high time you found allies——"

"Oh, no! not at all, father," began the young man. "We have been idle scarce two weeks, and I have told you that in case of necessity we can hold out two months if we would conquer; and conquer we must."

The old man shook his head.

"Two months! You can hold out that length of time, Ulrich; so can I and Lorenz, but not those who have wives and children."

"They *must*," said Ulrich coolly. "I had thought we might carry this through more quickly and easily, but I erred. If those above us insist on driving us to extremities, we will let them taste those extremities to the last drop."

"Or they us," interposed Lorenz. "If the master really——"

Ulrich stamped furiously.

"The master, and always the master! Have you, then, no other designation for this Berkow? You did not use to call him so; but since he has told you to your face what he is and what he will do you call him no other name. I tell you if we succeed we are the masters; then he will have only the name and we the power. He knows right well that it will end in this. That is why he resists us so and why all our demands must be granted at any price."

"*Try it*," said the overseer curtly. "See if you alone can turn the world upside down. It is a long time since I have had a word to say about it."

Lorenz took his hat from the window-sill and made ready to leave."

"You know how far we can go," he said. "You are our leader, Ulrich."

Ulrich's face grew dark.

"Yes, I am your leader," he replied. "But I had thought it more easy to hold you together. You make things difficult enough."

We?" asked the young miner excitedly. "You surely cannot complain of us: we all obey you at your word."

"Obey!" With a morose, searching glance Ulrich measured his comrade's face. "No," he said, "there is no lack of obedience; I do not complain of that; but things have changed with us all, and particularly between you and me, Carl. You all now seem so strange and cold and shy, and sometimes I think you fear me more than anything else."

"No, no, Ulrich!" cried Lorenz, in a manner so excited as to lead to the supposition that his friend was right. "We confide in you wholly, entirely. What you have done has been done for us, not for yourself: we all know that and shall not forget it."

The words were harmless enough, and still they seemed to have a hidden meaning. Ulrich appeared to feel this, for with a penetrating gaze he fixed his eyes upon the speaker. Lorenz recoiled from the glance and looked at the floor.

"I must go," he said hastily. "I will send Wilms over to you. Will you still remain here so that he can find you?"

Ulrich made no answer. The glowing excitement of the last few moments had all at once yielded again to the deep pallor his face had worn on his entrance. He only nodded his head in assent and turned to the window.

Lorenz bade the overseer good-night and left the room. Martha rose and went out with him. The girl had not spoken a word during the entire interview, but had gazed steadfastly on both men. She remained quite a long time outside, but this did not occur to those left behind. They knew that a prospective bridal pair must have much to whisper to each other, and seemed to concern themselves very little about it.

The father and son were alone, but the silence between them was even more oppressive than before at Ulrich's entrance. Ulrich yet stood at the window, his forehead pressed against the pane, and

stared out without seeing anything. The overseer had not left his place: he still sat at the table, his head resting on his hand; but the old man's face had strangely altered in these last weeks. It had become care-worn and sorrowful: the furrows graven by age had deepened and the eyes looked weary and troubled, as if all that early energy and combativeness which had led him to give so many severe lectures to his son had gone forever.

The silence at last became intolerable for Ulrich, and he turned around with an impatient gesture.

"And have you nothing at all to say, father, to the news Wilms brings us? Is it, then, all the same to you whether we conquer or are conquered?"

The overseer slowly raised his head.

"It certainly is not all the same to me," he replied, "but I cannot be delighted at having you break out into threats and violence. I will wait and see who this harms most—the gentlemen or us. You need ask nothing more from the miners, for you have got your will. Well, go ahead! You are now master and lawgiver of the whole works. All come to you, all bow before you, all obey you at your word. This was just what you wanted from the first, just why all this was planned——"

"*Father!*" interrupted Ulrich, starting up.

"Ah, well! let that matter rest," said the old man evasively. "You will not confess it to me or to yourself, but it is so! They have all gone with you, and I also, for I could not remain back alone. See what you are leading us to! You must take the responsibility."

"Did I begin the rebellion alone?" asked Ulrich passionately. "Was it not a unanimous conclusion that things must change, and did we not agree to stand together until the change was effected?"

"Then no concessions had been made; now all your reasonable demands have been granted. The things for which you would fight are not the demands of the workmen—they are your own; and it is you alone who hold fast to them. If it had not been for you the men would all be at work again and we should have peace and prosperity upon the works."

The young steiger* scornfully threw back his head.

"Ah, well!" he said. "I own that all this is my doing, and I think it no disgrace to me that I know more and see further than the others. If they are content to have the old misery made a little more tolerable, the little span of life in the mines more secure, I am not content, and the courageous spirits among us are not so. We demand much, almost everything, that is true; and if Berkow were still the millionaire the world considers him, he might guard against thus falling into our hands. But he is a millionaire no longer; and upon us, upon whether our hands work or refuse to work for him, depends his whole weal or woe. You do not know, father, how things look up in the bureau and the conference chamber: but I know; and I tell you

* Master-miner.

that, let him resist as he will, he must yield as soon as the rebellion breaks loose upon him from all sides."

"And I tell you he will *not* yield," declared the overseer. "He will sooner close the works. I know Arthur. When he was a little boy he was just as he now is—entirely different from you. You always set about things violently—you would conquer all by force, whether it was a piece of work, a garden fence, or a comrade. He did not willingly set about anything, and it was only after long hesitation that he could persuade himself to this; but let him once begin a work, and he would never let it go until finished. Now he is fairly awake, and he will show you all of what stuff he is made. Now that he has the reins in his hands, no one can force them from him. He has something of your own obstinacy. If you are ever made to feel it, remember my words."

Ulrich did not contradict with his wonted violence, but his dark, lowering glance told how enraged he was that he could not contradict. Perhaps he had already experienced this obstinacy.

"And however things turn out," continued the father, "do you think that you will remain steiger —that you will be allowed upon the works after all that has happened?"

The young man laughed derisively.

"No, in truth not, if it depended upon Berkow and the officers. They surely would not take me again into favor. But we ask no favors; we

dictate; and our first demand of all is for me to remain."

"And are you so sure of this?"

"Father, do not insult my comrades to my face! They will never desert me."

"Not even if the first demand from headquarters is for you to go? And if Berkow himself makes it?"

"No, never! He can never accomplish that. The workmen all know that I have not done this for myself. Things were well with me. I had no need to starve, for I could find my bread anywhere. It was their misery I would relieve. Do not speak of their deserting me, father. They give me trouble enough, I own; but if things come to the worst I will still fight my way through: no one will leave me in the hour of peril. Wherever they go I shall lead them, and I know that they will stand by me, even in misery and death."

"Yes, at the first they would have done so, but not now." The old man had risen, and as now, for the first time, he turned his face to the light, one saw how sorrowful were his features, how bowed his form, but a little while ago so erect and vigorous. "You yourself have just said to Lorenz that things have changed," he continued in a hollow voice, "and you must know the day and hour when the change came. I need not tell you this, Ulrich: I can only say that day robbed me of the little peace and joy I had still hoped for my old age. Now all is gone forever!"

"*Father!*" cried the young man.

The overseer made a hasty, repellent gesture.

"Never mind," he said. "I know nothing of it; I will know nothing of it, even if I am forced to hear it. The bare thought has almost robbed me of my senses."

Ulrich's eyes flashed—threatening as before at Lorenz' insinuation.

"And if I now tell you, father, that the meshes of the rope were already broken, that my hand had nothing to do with it——"

"No, tell me nothing," returned the old man bitterly. "I cannot believe you, neither do the men believe in you any more. You have always been wild and violent; in your wrath you would strike down even your best friend. Go among your comrades and say to them, 'It was a mere accident,' not one of them will believe you."

"*Not one!*" repeated Ulrich sadly. "And not even you, father?"

The old man fixed his troubled eyes upon his son.

"Can you here declare to my face that you had no blame in the accident—none at all? That you——"

He did not end the question, for Ulrich could not endure his glance. His still flashing eyes were fixed upon the floor: he turned away with a tremulous gesture and was silent.

There was a long, oppressive silence in the room, broken only by the old man's heavy breathing.

His hand trembled as he passed it over his forehead, and his voice trembled still more as he at last said :

"You say you had no hand in the accident? You might not have had directly, but all suspect you. Nothing can be investigated, nothing proved—God be thanked! nothing at least by the law. Confide in me alone, Ulrich ; tell me what really did happen down there; but boast no more of your comrades. You must have seen that since that day they all fear you. See how long you will be able to rule them by this fear alone."

The old man left the room; the son made a movement as if he would rush after him; then all at once he stood still, and with his clinched hand beat his forehead, while from his throat there came a sound almost like a repressed groan.

Ten minutes might have passed, when the door again opened and Martha entered. Her uncle had not returned and Ulrich lay upon the lounge, his face buried in his hands. But this did not seem in the least to surprise the girl. She merely glanced at him, and then, stepping to the table, began to gather up her work.

At the sound of her step Ulrich started up. He now rose slowly and came over to her. Usually he took no interest in Martha's affairs—not enough at least to converse with her about them. To-day it was otherwise. Perhaps for this stubborn, reticent nature the moment had come when he longed for some word, some token of sympathy. Doubly

dear must have been such word or token just now, when all shunned him, all drew back from him.

"So you and Lorenz are really lovers?" he began. "I have not once spoken with you on the subject, Martha: I have latterly had so many other things in my head. Are you betrothed?"

"Yes," was the short, half-evasive answer.

"And when will the marriage be?"

"There is plenty of time before that."

Ulrich gazed down at the girl, who, with hasty breathing and trembling fingers, busied herself about the work, not even looking up to him, but yet he dreamed that a silent reproach lay in her eyes.

"You have done right, Martha," said he gently, "quite right. Carl is good and kind and loves you more than—any other would have been able to do. And still you hesitated in your decision. When did you give him your promise?"

"Three weeks ago to-day."

"Three weeks ago to-day! Is that so? That was the day of the accident in the mines. Was it really at that time?"

"Yes, just then! Until then I could not. On that day I first knew that I could be his wife."

"*Martha!*"

From the young man's voice came forth a cry, half-anger, half-pain. He sought to lay his hand upon her arm. She trembled violently and involuntarily turned away. Ulrich let his hand fall and stepped backward.

"And *you* too?" he said in a hollow voice. "Indeed, indeed, Martha, I should not have thought it!"

"Ulrich!" broke forth the girl in wild, despairing agony. "Oh, my God! what have you done to us? what have you done to yourself?"

He stood opposite her. The hand which he rested upon the table trembled, but his features had taken on an expression of fearful hardness and bitterness.

"What have I done to myself? For that I alone am answerable. To you? Well, no one will listen to the story from me. But I tell you once for all" —here his voice rose loud and threatening—"that I have had enough of these endless innuendoes and vexations. I can endure them no longer. Believe what you please and of whom you please. In the future it will all be the same to me. What I have begun I will carry through in spite of you all; and if no one will place confidence in me I shall well know how to enforce obedience."

He went. Martha made no effort to detain him, and such effort would have been in vain. He slammed the door behind him so violently that it jarred the whole house. A moment after he was out in the open air.

CHAPTER XIII.

The arrival of guests at the Berkow country-seat had certainly brought some life, but it had introduced no greater union into the cold, alienated household of this young married pair. Although the visit was designed to be only of a few days' duration, Arthur found plenty of excuses for absence and opportunities for avoiding any frequent meetings, a piece of civility for which his father and young brother-in-law were extremely grateful.

Baron Windeg, after a two weeks' stay upon the Rabenau estates, now his own, was returning to the Residence. Upon his first visit to his daughter he had been obliged to leave the next morning. Even the fearful catastrophe which had happened during his stay could not detain him, for a nearer duty of relationship summoned him to pay the last honors to his cousin. After this duty had been faithfully discharged he had found in the household and upon the estates much demanding the presence of the new heir. Now in the company of his eldest son, whom he had allowed to follow him, he had set out for home, and as Curt had not seen his sister since her marriage, they naturally took the short by-road leading over the Berkow estates.

From the conversation which upon the day of their arrival took place in Eugenie's parlor, and from which, as usual, Arthur was absent, this seemed to be something more than a mere visit or reunion. Eugenie and her father had for a long time been sitting together on the sofa; now the baron had risen and stood before his daughter, while Curt, leaning against a chair, with a look of intent expectation, gazed over to his sister.

Eugenie had rested her forehead in her hand so that the hand shaded her face. She did not change her position, she did not even look up, as she answered in a low voice:

"I do not need these hints and insinuations, father, to enable me to know your meaning. You speak of a—separation."

"Yes, my child," said the baron gravely; "of a separation, no matter under what pretext or at what price. Those forced to a thing are wont to hold to it only through compulsion: this the Berkows themselves must admit. Now that I am master of my affairs, now that I need no longer be their debtor, I will venture all to release you from those fetters which you assumed only for my sake, and which, whether you admit it or not, make you infinitely unhappy."

Eugenie did not answer. The father took her hand and again sat down by her side.

"Is the thought new and surprising to you? It occurred to me at the moment when I received the unexpected tidings of the change in our fortunes.

What did old Berkow not resort to in order to obtain this union with us? The possibility is not imaginable that he would have allowed a divorce which must exclude him from that circle where he had forced entrance through us, and the contest could not have been undertaken with a man who in his unscrupulousness was capable of anything. His sudden death has changed all, but the opposition of his son remains to be overcome. Arthur in the whole affair played only a passive *rôle* and resigned himself to be the tool of his father. I hope he will yield to energetic proceedings on our side."

"He will yield," replied the young wife in a low voice. "You need have no anxiety on that account."

"So much the better!" returned the baron. "So much the sooner we shall reach our goal."

He seemed, indeed, in great haste to reach this goal. To the poor, almost bankrupt nobleman who saw ruin just before him, no choice had remained but to accept Eugenie's sacrifice and thereby redeem the name and station of his son. Humiliating as this had been to him, he had bowed to necessity, and necessity had taught him to bear it. But the heir of Rabenau, who had won back his full independence and his full self-importance, who could with ease restore the sum he had received, felt this compulsion a burning disgrace and his daughter's marriage a heavy wrong against her, for which he must at any price atone. During his entire sojourn upon the new estates this thought had been uppermost in his mind, and he had laid his plans, which were now ready for execution.

"It must be your wish, Eugenie, as well as ours, that this painful transaction be conducted to an end as speedily as possible. I think you had better now accompany us to the Residence and from there take the necessary steps. You can then simply decline returning to your husband and await the decree of divorce. We will take care that he does not violently assert his rights."

"Yes, by Heaven, we will do that, Eugenie!" interposed Curt passionately. "If he should still refuse to undo this shameful business your brother's sword will compel him to it. He cannot now threaten us with disgrace and public humiliation as his father did. It was the only thing before which the Windegs have ever trembled—the only means by which they could force a daughter of our house to an alliance with them."

"Recall your threats, Curt," said Eugenie; "and you, father, banish your anxieties. Both are here unnecessary. This divorce, which you think must be a matter for strife and compulsion, has long been a settled thing between Arthur and me."

Windeg started up, and in violent surprise Curt drew nearer his sister. Eugenie evidently struggled to give firmness to her voice, but she could not succeed; the voice trembled audibly as she continued:

"We had agreed upon this, even before Berkow's death, but we wished to shun the publicity of so early and sudden a rupture, and therefore decided to preserve the outward restraints of a married life."

"Even before Berkow's death!" repeated Curt; "that was shortly after your marriage."

"And you yourself had spoken of the matter? You were decided upon it?" asked the baron, in equal surprise.

Neither of the two men could understand the pain so plainly depicted on the young wife's face. She evidently summoned all her self-control for the answer, and it was firmly given:

"I have never alluded to the subject. It was Arthur who, of his own free will, offered me the separation."

The baron and his son looked at each other, as if this statement passed their powers of comprehension.

"I certainly was not prepared for this," said the baron at last slowly. "*He himself?* I had not expected that."

"It is all the same," cried Curt, in a sudden access of tenderness, "if he only gives you back to us, Eugenie. None of us has been able to enjoy the new inheritance, because we knew that you were unhappy for our sake. Now if you come back to us our father, we all, shall begin to breathe freely in the new life. You have everywhere in it all been wanting to us."

He flung his arm around his sister, and for a few moments she buried her face on his shoulder. But this beautiful face was deathly white and cold, as Curt had once before seen it at the altar. Why should this be when she was now to return to the father's house from which she was then to be torn?

The baron, in some surprise, gazed upon his daughter, who now rose erect and passed her handkerchief over her forehead.

"Forgive me, papa, if I seem strange to you today," she said. "I am not quite well—not well enough, at least, for a conversation on this subject. You must permit me to withdraw. I——"

"You have suffered too much of late," added the father tenderly. "I see it, my child, even if you do not confess it to me. Go, and leave to me all the care. I will spare you as much as possible."

"This is very singular, papa," said the young man as the door closed behind his sister. "Do you comprehend this Berkow? I do not."

Baron Windeg, with contracted brow, paced up and down the room. With the strangeness of this revelation blended something very mortifying to him. The proud aristocrat had found it quite comprehensible that an upstart with millions at his command should shun neither intrigues nor sacrifices and venture all to force a relationship with him, even though such relationship brought with it only contemptuous hatred; but he had never forgiven his plebeian son-in-law for receiving the hand of a Baroness Windeg with as much indifference as if this had been only a common marriage, and for having afterward shown himself as unappreciative of the high honor as his father had been appreciative. And now he—this Arthur Berkow—sought a release from the union before they had even so much as permitted him. This was quite too much

for the pride of a Windeg who had been ready to contend for the recovery of his daughter, but who could not bear to receive her back from the haughtiness or the indifference of her husband.

"I will speak with Berkow," he said at length, "and if he really is of our mind, which, notwithstanding Eugenie's assertion, I must still doubt, the business shall be entered upon immediately."

"Immediately?" asked Curt. "They have been scarce three months married, and I think they are right in seeking to avoid too early and abrupt a separation."

"Certainly they are," replied the baron, "and I should agree with you unconditionally if I had not very urgent reasons for hastening the matter. Upon the works here all is not as it should be. I have received a hint from a friend who knows that the rebellion now broken out among the miners may inflict a deadly wound upon the Berkow wealth, which is believed so uncalculable. If Berkow's fortune really collapses his wife cannot leave him just at that moment: in the face of the world she cannot. Although we have deeper and more serious reasons for the separation, the world would regard the loss of fortune as the reason, and this must not be. It is better for us to assume the responsibility of so early a rupture than to have our hands tied when the dreaded catastrophe really comes. A divorce is not a transaction which can be carried through in a few weeks: it requires a year at least; and in half that time the separation

can be arranged if Berkow throws no difficulties in our way. Eugenie must return to our house, must be free, before they suspect in the Residence how matters stand here."

"I thought my sister would enter into our plan with far more pleasure and animation," said Curt thoughtfully. "If they had previously decided upon this step, the idea of course was not new to her; but yet she is cold and silent, as if all this lay infinitely remote from her, as if it dealt not at all with her own freedom."

The baron shrugged his shoulders.

"She suffers at the thought of the unavoidable publicity, she shrinks from the formalities and disagreeableness of the trial, which cannot be spared her. Such a separation is always a painful step for a woman, but still it must be taken. In this case, at least, we shall have the whole Residence on our side. The reason of this marriage could have been no secret, and all will readily comprehend why we seek to dissolve it."

"There comes Berkow," said Curt half-aloud as the door of the adjoining room opened. "You will speak with him, will you not, papa? Shall I leave you alone?"

Windeg shook his head.

"You are the eldest son of our house, and in such an interview the presence of a third person is apt to impose a salutary restraint. You will remain, Curt."

While these words were softly and hastily ex-

changed, Arthur had passed through the anteroom and now entered. The greeting on both sides was icy and polite as usual, and the conversation began with the wonted commonplaces. The guests regretted that they could so seldom enjoy the society of their host, and the host pleaded a pressure of business which robbed him of the pleasure, etc.—mutual civilities which neither side was expected to believe and behind which they intrenched themselves so as, at least, to have something to say.

"I hope that Eugenie's constant presence richly compensates you for my enforced absence," continued Arthur, glancing through the *salon* as if in quest of his young wife.

"Eugenie has withdrawn on account of a slight indisposition," explained the baron, "and I would employ the opportunity of her absence to express a wish whose fulfillment depends principally upon yourself."

"You have only to state your wish, Herr Baron, if the granting of it depends upon me," returned Arthur, placing himself opposite his father-in-law; while Curt, who well knew what was coming, withdrew to a window-niche and seemed to be attentively gazing out upon the terrace. Baron Windeg's manner assumed its utmost formality and all that aristocratic dignity which lay at his command. By this manner he sought to impress the plebeian husband of his daughter and at the outset silence every possible opposition; for at the most he could but regard that separation proposed on Arthur's

side as a mere ebullition after some passionate scene. He did not believe that Arthur seriously had any such idea.

"They must, I think, place a greater significance upon the rebellion at your works than it really deserves," began he. "Yesterday as I stopped at the town to call on the commandant of the garrison there, a friend of my youth, I was told that the outbreak of your workmen into open insurrection was very probable."

"People in the town seem to be more occupied with my works and my workmen than I had supposed," replied Arthur coldly. "In any event, I have not called on the colonel for eventual help."

The baron understood the rebuff.

"For myself, I naturally have no opinion in the matter," he replied calmly. "I would only remind you that it will not be proper to expose Eugenie to possible scenes and outbreaks. I very much desire to take my daughter home with me for a time until matters here become settled."

The young man's face betrayed some slight emotion. He threw a hasty glance over to the door leading to his wife's chamber, as if he would ascertain if the wish had originated there. But his answer was perfectly calm.

"Eugenie is entire mistress of her own actions. If she thinks the removal necessary, I give her perfect freedom."

Baron Windeg gave a nod of satisfaction.

"Then she will accompany us to-morrow," he said.

"As to the duration of her visit there, we come to a point painful for us both to discuss; but I prefer to treat with you by word of mouth, especially so as I know that in the main our wishes coincide."

Arthur seemed about to start up from his chair, but he controlled himself and kept his place.

"Very well. I suppose that Eugenie has already communicated with you."

"Yes. Are you surprised at that? She certainly would first of all confide in her father."

The young man's lips quivered.

"I supposed," said he, "that the matter would remain a secret between us until the time for action came. I have erred, as I see."

"Why defer the carrying out of a conclusion once fixed upon?" asked the baron calmly. "The time is just now favorable. The present condition of your estates gives us the best and plainest excuse for my daughter's removal. The world need not at first know that this removal is to be a permanent one. Now in summer, when all our friends have left the Residence, the preparatory steps can be taken unremarked. Where publicity cannot be avoided, it is always best to perform a deed in the face of the world. In this way the propensity for gossip is soonest stayed."

A short pause ensued. Arthur again fixed his glance, this time with an inquiring expression, upon the door leading to Eugenie's chamber. Then he turned deliberately to her father and asked:

"Does the wish for this haste come from Eugenie herself?"

The baron thought proper at this moment to conceal the truth: this would end matters sooner, and in any event Eugenie would thank him for it.

"I speak in my daughter's name," declared he formally.

Arthur started up suddenly, and so violently that the chair fell back."

"I consent to all, Herr Baron," he said, "to all. I thought I had stated to your daughter my reasons for delay: they were for the most part dictated by regard for her. I did not think of myself. If, regardless of these, she still wishes matters accelerated—let it be."

His manner of speaking was so peculiar that Curt, who, although he had not lost a syllable of the conversation, still seemed to be gazing out on the terrace, all at once turned around and looked in surprise at his brother-in-law. Baron Windeg also seemed startled, but there was really no ground for excitement here, where both sides were simply hastening forward a disagreeable necessity.

"You also unconditionally agree to the separation?" he asked somewhat hesitatingly.

"Certainly."

The baron breathed more freely. Eugenie, then, had been right when she predicted the immediate consent of her husband. The business now remaining, in the baron's opinion, offered scarce any difficulty.

"I am very grateful to you for your obligingness," he said courteously; "it will do much to

facilitate a step so painful for both sides. One thing still remains, which, though it has no connection with this matter, must yet be arranged. Your father"—a deep flush overspread the forehead of the now wealthy baron at this remembrance—"your father had the goodness to assume certain obligations for me which at that time I could not fulfill. I am now in a position to do this, and I would like to hasten——".

He paused, for Arthur raised his eyes and fixed them on his face in a glance so open and so reproachful that he could not go on.

"Had we not better let this matter rest?" he asked. "For my part, I implore it."

"It might rest so long as our mutual relations remained as now," replied Windeg gravely; "not when they are dissolved. You will not oblige me to remain your debtor."

"This cannot be called a debt in the usual sense. My father, at the last, only enforced his own demands, and the documents were destroyed as soon as"—here the terrible excitement of the young man broke through his enforced repose—"as soon as the price for them was paid!"

The baron seemed deeply wounded.

"At that time the agreement was closed at Herr Berkow's express wish," replied he coldly; "now it is to be dissolved mostly at our wish. Circumstances are now changed."

"It it absolutely necessary that in this divorce business we hold fast to the conditions of a bill of

sale?" Arthur interrupted with cutting irony. "I hope that for a second time my wife and I shall not be made the objects of a business transaction. Once was enough."

The baron misunderstood the words, fully as he misunderstood the impulse which dictated them. He again put on his aristocratic air and with great dignity said:

"Be pleased to remember, Herr Berkow, that the term 'business,' which you are pleased to use, has relation to only one of the two parties: it does not apply to us."

Arthur stepped back, but his bearing was proud and unapproachable as any the titled gentleman opposite him had ever known how to assume.

"I now know," he said, "how this marriage was brought about, and I also know how those obligations arose which forced you to consent. This being the case, you can well appreciate my demand that the debt shall not be alluded to, not even by another syllable. I demand from you, Herr Baron, that you do not force a son to blush at the remembrance of his father."

Baron Windeg had once before been unable to comprehend his son-in-law when he declined the title of nobility. But this had been done in that cool, negligent way characteristic of the former Arthur Berkow. This present appearance and bearing quite petrified the baron. He glanced involuntarily over to his son, who had stepped out of the window-niche and whose youthful face expressed an astonishment he took no pains to conceal.

"I did not know that you looked upon the transaction in this light," said Windeg after a pause. "I had no intention of wounding you, but——"

"I assume that. And now grant me the favor of forgetfulness in regard to it all. As to this divorce business, I will instruct my lawyer to meet every step of yours. If anything is required of me personally, I beg you to command me. I will do everything in my power toward gaining the desired end speedily and considerately."

He bowed to both gentlemen and left the room. The next moment Curt was at his father's side.

"What does all this mean, papa?" he asked. "What, for Heaven's sake, has come over this Arthur within the last three months? Yesterday I found him far more decided, far more serious than usual; but this demeanor—I would never have believed it possible from him."

The baron had not yet recovered from his astonishment, but the exclamation of his son brought back his bewildered senses.

"Arthur really seems not to have been aware of the *rôle* his father played with us," said he. "That certainly changes matters. If he only would not harbor the supposition that I am to remain his debtor!"

"He does quite right," cried Curt excitedly, "if he knows of the usury by which old Berkow goaded us to ruin. He did not advance us a quarter of the sum which afterward seemed of such giant dimensions to us, and the son could not take back a penny

of it without dishonoring himself. We saw how deeply mortified he was as you recalled the humiliating story. But the conversation took a strange turn. Though in this transaction he played a more disgraceful *rôle* than we, he at least knew how to represent matters in such a light as to make us ashamed of our offer."

Windeg took the last remark rather ungraciously, perhaps because he could not contradict it.

"If we did young Berkow wrong, I am now ready to render him full justice," he said; "and all the more because in this divorce affair we really owe him thanks. I would not have believed he would make it so easy for us, although I am aware that he seemed indifferent to the marriage from the first."

Curt resumed that thoughtful air so unusual to him.

"The divorce does not appear to me by any means so settled," he said. "Berkow was far from being so calm as he would have us suppose, and so was Eugenie. The violence with which he trembled when you declared that she insisted on an immediate separation showed nothing like indifference, and the face with which Eugenie left us still less. From all this a strange idea has arisen in my mind."

The baron smiled, and with an air of great superiority said:

"You are still a mere child, Curt, in spite of your years and your epaulets. Do you really suppose that the conclusion which it now appears they

reached long ago came without preliminary scenes and contentions? In any event, Eugenie has suffered bitterly, and perhaps Berkow. What you have so wisely remarked is only the reverberation of earlier storms, nothing more. God be thanked, we have now fair weather on both sides and the storms are at an end."

"Rather, they are just beginning," replied Curt half-aloud as with his father he left the *salon*.

CHAPTER XIV.

Evening had fallen, but throughout the Berkow mansion reigned a restless activity. Baron Windeg and his daughter had had a long conversation that afternoon; and immediately after the maid had received orders to pack her mistress' trunks. Herr Berkow had also announced to the servants that early to-morrow morning his wife would set out with her father for a visit of some weeks to the Residence—a piece of news that naturally went the rounds of the officers' houses, and in them, as at the Berkow house, caused more anxiety than surprise.

It was clear as the sunlight that the chief only sent her ladyship away because he was convinced that insurrection would soon break out upon the works. He would have her safe in the Residence, and had, no doubt, requested her father to come and take her away.

Windeg was right: the pretext was so plausible that it occurred to no one to doubt it. The peculiarly cold relations between this married pair had at first been much spoken of and commented upon throughout the Berkow colony, but now all such comment had ceased. It was known that the marriage had not been one of affection, but as nothing

like passionate scenes or violent quarrels had been seen or heard by the servants, as the young husband was always politeness itself to his wife and she showed the utmost calmness and amiability in her relations to him, it was supposed that they must have become accustomed to each other and be quite content together—the usual sequel of such mercenary marriages. Their somewhat novel manner of life was assumed to be only a custom of the fashionable world, as people in the Residence were said to live, for the most part, on this distant, coolly polite footing. That the Baroness Windeg and the son of the millionaire Berkow followed this custom had ceased to be a matter for surprise or remark.

No one dreamed that the departure of her ladyship, which had been preceded by no sort of quarrel, involved a separation, and it surprised no one that the master and mistress did not pass the evening together and that Baron Windeg and his son supped alone in the dining-room. It did not seem strange to the lady's-maid that her mistress, not being well, had tea sent to her *boudoir;* and it was a matter of no comment to the servants that Herr Berkow did not sup at all, but, on account of urgent business, retired to his cabinet, having first given orders on no account to be disturbed.

Without, utter darkness reigned, and within, the lamp burning on the writing-table of Arthur's cabinet threw its light upon the man who for more than an hour had paced restlessly up and down—who now, behind closed doors, threw off that so

long-enforced indifference and gave free course to the storm that raged within him.

This was indeed no longer the *blasé* young heir with his apathetic indifference; neither was it the young chief who, with an energy and determination so suddenly awakened, knew how to impress his workmen and impart new courage to his officers.

In this face raged the whole violence of a passion whose magnitude even its possessor had not known until about to lose its object. That moment had now come, and it demanded its right. Upon this pale forehead, on these trembling lips, in these burning eyes stood plainly written all that to-day's conversation had cost him. And yet Baron Windeg had expressed his surprise that the affair could be so easily arranged!

And now it had come—that long-dreaded hour of separation! And it was well that it had come thus; that another will had interposed where his own had proved itself powerless. How often during the last fortnight had Arthur thought of availing himself of the excuse which the baron now proposed to him, and thereby shortening the torture of this life with Eugenie; for that calculating outside coldness, for whose deception the inward glow must every moment atone, could be borne no longer. For this mortal strength could not suffice, and yet nothing had been done.

That the inevitable had best happen speedily is a truth none can gainsay, but not every one who possesses the courage to set the knife with firm

hand to an envenomed bodily wound has the same courage to tear a consuming passion from the heart.

They had long been alienated, these two, but he saw ever before him that beautiful blond head, with the proud, but now grave features and the dark, expressive eyes; that voice rang ever in his ears; and at moments there flashed through his soul a lightning-like gleam of happiness, which counterbalanced days and weeks full of bitterness; as yesterday, when in the forest, with such manifest anxiety she had pressed her horse close to his, when she had trembled in his arms as he lifted her down. It might be cowardice, but of his own free will he could not have renounced all this until others had ordered it as now.

The door softly opened and a servant stepped hesitatingly upon the threshold.

"What is it?" asked Arthur hastily. "Have I not given orders——"

"I beg your pardon, Herr Berkow," said the man timidly. "I know that you do not wish to be disturbed; but as—as her ladyship herself——"

"Who?"

"My lady herself is here and wishes——"

The servant had no time to end the sentence, and he could but be surprised at the violence with which his master flung open the door and hastened into the anteroom, where he very unexpectedly saw his wife, who seemed to be waiting there. The next moment he was at her side.

"Do you have yourself announced? What superfluous etiquette!"

"I heard that you would see no one, and Franz told me the order was for all, without exception."

Arthur cast an angry glance at the servant, who said apologetically:

"I really did not know what to do in this case. It is the first time her ladyship has come here."

The words contained an embarrassed apology, nothing more; but Eugenie turned quickly away, and the excuse for this intrusion which was upon her lips remained unspoken. The man was right: his instructions did not suffice for so unusual a case as the appearance of her ladyship in his master's apartments. This was the first time she had entered them. They had as yet always met in the *salon*, the dining-hall, or reception-rooms. It was no wonder this visit was a surprise to the servant.

Arthur motioned to the valet to withdraw and invited his wife into the cabinet. She paused hesitatingly upon the threshold.

"I wished to speak with you," she said in a low voice.

"I am quite at your command," replied Arthur.

He closed the door and motioned Eugenie to take a seat. These few moments had sufficed to give back to the young man all that self-possession of which, for the last few weeks, he had made such effectual use. Answer and question were as cool and formal as though he offered a civility to some strange lady in a strange *salon*.

"Will you not take a seat?"

"I thank you. I will not long detain you."

There was something timid and hesitating in the young woman's manner, which peculiarly contrasted with her usual self-possessed bearing. Perhaps she felt strange in these rooms; and perhaps, too, it was difficult for her to find words with which to begin. Arthur made no effort to place her at her ease. He saw how twice she sought to speak and was not able, but he sat at the opposite side of the writing-table quietly waiting for her to begin.

"My father has told me of his conversation with you to-day and also of its result," she said at length.

"I expected this; and it was on this very account —I beg your pardon, Eugenie—that I was at first so surprised to see you here. I believed you busied in preparations for departure."

The words might well cause Eugenie to forget his emotion at her appearance, and they seemed to have this effect. Some moments passed before she answered:

"You have already announced my departure to the servants?"

"Yes. I suppose I anticipated your wishes. In any event, I thought it better to have the order for preparation given by me. You know the pretext we employ. Did you design conducting the affair in any other manner? If so, I regret not having known your intention."

The tone was icy, and from it something like an

icy breath seemed to float over to Eugenie. She involuntarily started back.

"I have nothing to suggest to you. It only surprised me that the time of my departure once firmly agreed upon should be hastened. You had the same reasons for holding fast to that decision as at first."

"I? It was your wish, your demand, to which in this case I consented. At least, Baron Windeg told me this was so."

Eugenie started. It seemed as if, with the deep sigh of relief that all at once rose from her breast, her timidity and hesitation had vanished—as if with that answer all her courage had returned.

"I suspected this. My father has gone too far, Arthur. He has spoken in my name when he only expressed his own wishes. I am come to explain this misunderstanding and to tell you that I will not go, at least not until I hear from your lips that you demand it."

Eugenie had fixed her glance firmly, but in anxious, breathless expectation upon Arthur's face, as if she must and would read his eyes; but the eyes remained veiled and her words seemed not to have the slightest effect. She thought that a quiver passed over his features as she explained the misunderstanding, but perhaps she had only imagined this, for the emotion, if there was any, went as quickly as it came. The face remained unchanged and the voice retained its icy tone as, after a momentary pause, he answered:

"You will not go? And why not?"

The young wife, with the fullest decision, rose and stood before her husband.

"You yourself told me yesterday that in the struggle before you your existence was at stake. Since your last meeting with Hartmann I have known that the battle must be fought out to the bitter end, and that your position is far more dangerous than you will admit to me. I cannot and will not leave you in such a moment: that would be cowardice, and——"

"You are very magnanimous," interrupted Arthur; and now behind the coldness of his tone lay a bitterness he could not conceal. "But in order to practice magnanimity you must find some one who will accept it, and I will not accept yours."

Eugenie's hand, as if in repressed anger, grasped at the velvet-cushioned arm of the chair.

"You will not?"

"*No!* The plan emanated from your father: let it stand! He has doubtless a right to provide for the protection and security of his daughter, who will shortly belong to him, from the barbarities and excesses which may soon happen here. I give him full power in this matter and agree to to-morrow's separation."

The young wife energetically threw back her blond head.

"And I consent only so long as I consider it your wish. I will not yield in this matter to the dictation of my father. I have taken upon myself the

obligations of your wife, at least before the world, and before the world I will carry them out. They command me not to basely desert you in the hour of danger, but to remain at your side until the catastrophe is past and the time of our separation originally agreed upon has arrived. Then I will go, but not before."

"Not even if I imperatively demand it of you?"

"Arthur!"

He stood with half-averted face, one hand nervously crumpling a paper from his writing-table, which he had seized mechanically. The self-control so painfully summoned could no longer face this glance and tone.

"I have told you once already to play no magnanimous *rôles* with me," he said bitterly. "They cannot move me. *Duties!* A wife who of her own free will gives a man her hand and heart may well deem it her duty to remain by her husband in danger, to share his misfortune, perhaps his ruin, as she has shared his happiness. This certainly is not your case. We have no duties to each other, because we have had no right in each other. The only solace I could offer you in this enforced marriage was the possibility of its dissolution: it has been dissolved since that moment when we agreed to a divorce. That is my answer to your proposition."

Eugenie's dark eyes still remained steadily fixed upon Arthur's face. That fervid, treacherous gleam from his eyes, which once had seemed to unveil an

unknown depth to her, did not come to-day, when at any price she would have compelled it forth. He did not grant her the triumph of again seeing or suspecting that which alone could have induced this proud woman to come to him with such a proffer: he remained fully master of himself, and she was left in torturing doubt.

Yesterday, upon that wooded height, when the flaming glance of Ulrich Hartmann rested upon her face, the woman's instinct had plainly and unequivocally told her what lay behind that glance, and with that consciousness a sudden terror had come over her. There she had remained cool in the midst of the danger with which an insane passion threatened her; here, where there was nothing to fear, she trembled in feverish excitement, and for that very reason all those brown eyes had revealed to her up yonder was now veiled; for that reason the inner voice was silent in regard to that she would have given her life to know with certainty.

"You should not make remaining so difficult for me," she said, in a voice that betrayed the torturing suspense of her soul. She wavered between unbending pride and weak submission. "You know, Arthur, the struggle it must have cost me to come to you. Will you not consider it?"

The words sounded almost like an entreaty, but Arthur could not in his present mood understand this. The wild resentment, the fearful excitement which surged through his whole being, even here biased and controlled his better judgment as he cuttingly replied:

"I do not doubt that the Baroness Windeg makes an incalculable sacrifice in deciding for three months longer to bear my plebeian name and to remain by the side of a man she so thoroughly despises, even though he offers her immediate freedom. I was once compelled to hear how terrible both were to her, and can therefore estimate what this self-sacrifice costs."

"You taunt me with the conversation upon the evening of our arrival here," said Eugenie in a low voice. "I—I had forgotten it."

Now, at last, Arthur's eyes flashed, but the light for which she had sought and hoped was not there. A strange, hostile expression gleamed from them.

"Have you really? You do not ask whether I have forgotten it? I was obliged at that time to listen to your words, but they went to the utmost limit of what I could bear. Do you think that a man would with impunity allow a woman to tread him in the dust as I was trodden that evening, and then permit her to lift him up again if it happened to please her to change her mind? I am not quite the miserable weakling you deemed me. From that hour I ceased to be so. That hour decided my character; but it also decided our future. As for what threatens me and may threaten me, I will bear it alone. I have learned a great deal in these last weeks. I shall carry through this contest; but" —here he rose and, glowing with pride and resentment, stood before her—"but the woman who on our marriage-day, with such annihilating scorn,

thrust me from her, not even asking if the husband to whom she had just given her hand was really so guilty as she believed him; who took my assertion, made upon my word of honor, that I had known nothing of my father's share in that marriage transaction, as the subterfuge of a liar; who, in reply to my question whether she did not deem it worth her while to attempt the reformation of such a reprobate as I, flung forth a disdainful *No*—this woman I will not have at my side when I fight out the battle for my future. I will be alone!"

He turned impetuously away. Eugenie stood there silent, confounded. Greatly as her husband's character had changed of late, she had never before seen him in a passion; and now he was terribly angry—angry to a degree that frightened her. By this storm now raging against her she could judge what that evening had lain concealed behind the outward indifference which had so roused her indignation—what for months long had fumed within him until it had at last wrested him from the apathy which had become his second nature.

Ah, yes! That cold, disdainful *No*. She best knew the wrong that by its utterance she had done him; and now, when she saw how deeply it had wounded him, she felt that this hour might perhaps have canceled all the wrong each had done the other had it not been for that unfortunate last word.

This touched the young wife's pride, and where her pride was concerned all was over with her judg-

ment and prudence, even though she knew herself in the wrong.

"You will stand alone!" repeated she. "Well, then, I will not obtrude myself upon you. I came to convince myself whether my father's plan was yours also. I see that it is so—and I will leave you."

She turned to go. At the door she paused suddenly. It seemed to her, at the moment when her hand was upon the latch, as if he started up, as if he made a motion to rush after her; but this must have been an illusion, for when she turned around Arthur still sat at his writing-table. He was certainly deathly pale, but in his bearing, on every feature, stood written the word with which she had once thrust him from her—a bitter, unrelenting *No.*

Eugenie summoned up her last remaining courage for an adieu.

"We shall meet to-morrow only in my father's presence, and then, perhaps, never again. So—farewell, Arthur!"

"Farewell!" he said in a hollow voice.

The door closed behind her: she had vanished. This last interview had been unavailing: the last bridge to reconciliation was broken down. The obstinacy of neither would yield; neither would speak the word which would reconcile all, even had it been tenfold worse. Pride alone spoke, and thus was her decision spoken.

Gray and cloudy came the next morning over the mountains, but at an unwonted hour all was in

commotion at the Berkow house. The travelers must depart early so as to be in time at the station and reach the Residence that evening. Curt von Windeg was first in the *salon;* the baron still remained in his chamber, and Eugenie had not as yet made her appearance. The young officer seemed to wait for something or other with an impatience he could not conceal. He had already paced up and down the room several times, stood on the balcony, and then thrown himself down in a *fauteuil*, from which he now sprang up hastily as Arthur entered.

"Ah! you here already?" he said, greeting his young brother-in-law with that chilling politeness which was usual between them.

Curt ran excitedly to meet him.

"I would like to have a few words with you alone," he said; "but good heavens! what is the matter with you? Are you ill?"

"I?" answered Arthur calmly. "What are you thinking of? I am quite well."

"Indeed!" returned Curt, with a glance upon the pale, care-worn, melancholy face of his brother-in-law. "I should have supposed the contrary."

"I am not accustomed to this early rising," said Arthur somewhat impatiently; "it always makes one look weary. I fear you will have an unpleasant journey to-day. It is a horribly cloudy morning."

He stepped to the window as if to take an observation of the weather, but in truth it was only to withdraw from Curt's annoying scrutiny of his

face. But Curt would not let him escape so easily. He stepped close to his side.

"I wanted to be first here," began he a little hesitatingly, "because I sought a private interview with you, Arthur."

The individual addressed turned around, as much surprised at this request as at the manner of the address. During the whole period of their relationship Curt had scarce once called him by his baptismal name. He usually followed his father's example and employed the stiff "Herr Berkow."

"Well?" asked Arthur kindly.

A sort of timidity and embarrassment for the moment struggled in the young officer's features, but all at once he raised his handsome, open face to his brother-in-law and said frankly:

"We have done you wrong, Arthur, and I perhaps most of all. I was enraged at the compulsion employed with us, and—let me candidly confess it to you—I have had a downright hatred for you from the moment you became my brother-in-law Yesterday I learned that we had erred in regard to you, and then the hatred was all over. I am sorry, very sorry for it all; and this—this was what I wished to say to you. Will you accept my apology, Arthur?"

Warmly and cordially he held out his hand, and Arthur grasped it.

"I thank you, Curt," he simply said.

"God be thanked, this is over! It has kept me awake all night long," exclaimed Curt. "And,

believe me, my father now does you justice. It is true, he will not confess his thoughts to you; but I know what they are."

A smile flitted over Berkow's face, but neither his eyes nor forehead brightened: heavy shadows still lay upon both as he calmly answered:

"I am glad of it. So we separate, at least, not as enemies."

"And as for the separation," interrupted Curt hastily, "papa is still up in his chamber and Eugenie must be for the moment quite alone in hers. Will you not speak with her?"

"And why?" asked Arthur in surprise. "The baron may any moment appear, and Eugenie would hardly——"

"I will place myself before the door and let no one in," interrupted Curt eagerly. "I shall know how to keep papa outside until you are ready to see him."

A quick flush passed over Arthur's face as he met the intent, searching glance of his brother-in-law. But he gravely shook his head.

"No, Curt, that is unnecessary. I, yesterday evening, once again and finally, spoke with your sister."

"And about the departure?"

"Yes, about the departure."

The young officer looked somewhat disappointed, but no time remained to him for further propositions. Outside the baron's step was already heard and he immediately after entered. Curt, with a

half-angry gesture, withdrew more into the background of the room, muttering to himself: "And yet the thing is not right."

The unavoidable interview during breakfast was over. The precise formality of the baron and the constant presence of a servant had helped all through with it, and now the carriage drove up before the terrace. The gentlemen put on their overcoats, Eugenie's waiting-maid brought her mistress' hat and shawl, Arthur offered his wife his arm to conduct her down. The appearance of a perfect understanding should be preserved to the last moment.

Gray and cloudy the morning had come over the mountains; gray and cloudy it now descended into the valleys; before the windows ebbed and flowed a sea of fog, and within the cold, frosty morning light that already filled the rooms gave them a weird, desolate appearance. It seemed as if the costly splendor of their adorning had all at once lost glow and color—as if they had become empty, wholly empty, now that the young mistress was about to leave them, never to return.

Curt remarked silently that his sister had the same sad, weary look which had just now so startled him in Arthur's face, but otherwise he could not discover anything unusual in the appearance of either. They knew how to carry out the *rôle* they had undertaken, even though their features betrayed that it had cost them sleepless nights, and perhaps this dumb, cold self-possession was no *rôle* at all.

When the storm has raved itself out, then follows that calm which so often in life helps us over the bitterest, over the most dreaded events with comparative ease, because, as it were, a veil lies over the soul, shutting out a clear consciousness of the decisive moment; because all the earlier struggles and wrestlings subside into a dumb, hollow misery, through which only now and then darts a sharp, stifling thrill of agony, by which alone we are aware of how much we have really suffered.

Leaning on her husband's arm, Eugenie descended the stairs, without really being conscious where she went or how. As in a dream she saw the carpeted steps against which her dress rustled, the tall oleander trees which adorned the vestibule, the faces of the servants who made a parting bow to her ladyship—all this glided dim and shadowy past her. Then suddenly something sharp and almost painful touched her forehead. It was the cold morning air. She gazed out into it, and before her she saw the carriage which was to bear her away —it alone. Then terrace, flower-garden, park, and fountains all vanished in the twilight and the swaying fog.

Yet once again the eyes of the husband and wife met, but they said nothing to each other. The veil lay thick and heavy between them also. Then the young wife felt a hand moist and icy cold lying within her own and heard some seemingly polite, distant parting words which she did not understand; but it was Arthur's voice which spoke to her, and

with this consciousness, again a sharp, stifling pang darted through the hollow dream. Then came the stamping of hoofs and the rolling of wheels, and forward they went into the gray fog that ebbed and surged around them, as at that time when the separation had been decided—upon the wooded height in that hour of spring; and what there separates is separated for all eternity.

CHAPTER XV.

"I TELL you," said the chief engineer to the director as they were walking home together, "that things are getting serious. Hartmann seems to have given the signal for insurrection. The miners really defy us, and insults are the order of the day. Our men have stirred up the whole province to rebel. All the other works are in commotion: we only had the honor of beginning. All this is water to Hartmann's mill. He carries his head higher than ever."

"Herr Berkow seems to comprehend all," returned the director. "He has already sent her ladyship to a place of safety. That proceeding best proves what he fears from his miners."

"From the miners—pshaw!" exclaimed the chief engineer. "We might already have arranged matters with them if it had not been for one, but so long as he commands peace and quiet are not to be thought of. Only let Hartmann be a week absent from the works, and I would vouch for the balance."

"I have already thought of that," said the director, looking circumspectly around him; and then, lowering his voice: "I have already thought of

that, and whether we could not make use of the suspicion against him, which every one here entertains and with which I believe no one does him wrong. What think you of that?"

"That would not answer. We have suspicions enough, but where are the proofs? Nothing could be found wrong about the machine and the ropes, only that the rope had just broken; and the gentlemen of the law have searched thoroughly enough into the matter. How it came and what happened down there Hartmann alone knows, and he can equal any man in lying. If arrested, they would have to let him go free without result."

"But a law trial would for a time make him harmless. If we accuse him there would be some weeks' imprisonment."

The chief engineer frowned.

"Would you take upon yourself the responsibility of the fury of our miners if we imprison their leader? I would not. They would storm our houses if they saw through the maneuver, as they certainly would."

"That is questionable. They do not feel the old love for him.

"But they do the old fear. With that he rules them more despotically than ever; and then you do our hirelings wrong if you believe they would desert their leader upon a bare suspicion. They may stand in awe of him, they may become estranged from him in time; but the moment we lay hands upon him they will rally around him and

protect him from every danger. No, no! that will not do. What we would above all shun—a bloody conflict—would then be inevitable; and besides, I am convinced that Herr Berkow would not lend his hand to this."

"But does he still dream nothing of the suspicion?" asked the director.

"No. Naturally no one ventures to give him a hint of it, and I believe we had best spare him this for the present. He has already enough to bear."

"Ah, yes, more than enough; and the bad news of last week and Herr Schäffer's letters from the Residence seem not to remain without effect. I believe he seriously thinks of yielding."

"Oh, no! not at all," returned the chief engineer excitedly. "It is now too late for that. After the answer he gave the workmen when they offered him the choice of risking his fortune or of taking upon himself whatever discipline Herr Hartmann might choose to inflict—after the manner in which he met them there can be no more talk of yielding. If Berkow does not remain firm every vestige of his authority is gone. He must go forward; and to be obliged to go forward is always an advantage in a fight."

"But if his fortune is at stake!"

"Say, rather, if it is his honor which is at stake."

Both gentlemen fell into a heated and fruitless debate, whose result, as usual, was that each stood by his own opinion. They soon separated, and as the chief engineer entered his house he growled after his colleague:

"A very beautiful thing, this neutrality; always prettily anxious, always prettily cautious not to commit one's self with either party, because one can never know which is going to triumph. I wish that all the cowards— Wilberg, what the deuce are you saying there to my daughter?"

The two young people whom this question concerned shrank in fright from each other as if they had been detected in a crime, although, in reality, it was only a harmless kiss of Melanie's hand in which Herr Wilberg had indulged. But he looked, meanwhile, so sentimental and Melanie on her side so susceptible that the father, already vexed and enraged at his late conversation with the director, came storming between them like a hurricane.

"I most emphatically beg your pardon," stammered the young officer; while Fräulein Melanie, knowing that a kissing of the hand could under no circumstances be so bad a thing, looked on very saucily.

"I most emphatically beg for an explanation," cried the chief engineer angrily. "What business have you down here in the vestibule? Why do you not go up to the reception-room as you ought to?"

The explanation demanded could not be given in a word, although the young people were innocent enough in this meeting. Wilberg had come to the house of his superior officer with a message from Herr Berkow in his head and deep melancholy in his heart. The latter naturally arose from the departure of her ladyship. He had known of this the

evening before, but happily he had slept through the eventful morning. The young officer was no early riser: he had never been guilty of the folly of exposing himself to the cold, foggy morning air, which might have given him the rheumatism. It had not been he who in the gray dawn stood under the firs there, where the highway wound into the forest, patiently waiting, in spite of fog and cold, for the sake of the one minute in which the coach would roll past—for the sake of the one glance he might cast there, seeking the face he was not to find—the face which with closed eyes lay buried in the cushions.

When that other, returning home, went past his windows and entered the overseer's house, Herr Wilberg slept on in undisturbed repose; but this did not prevent his finding himself infinitely unhappy on awaking, and for the whole week through carrying about with him so melancholy a face that Fräulein Melanie, who by chance had met him in the vestibule, could not help sympathetically asking him what was the matter.

The young poet was just in that mood to pour forth his sorrow into the ear of any sympathetic being. He therefore sighed several times, made several efforts to speak, and at last unburdened his whole heart, naturally to receive in return the deepest sympathy. If the young lady had before been inquisitive, she was now affected beyond all measure. She thought this affair highly romantic and poor Wilberg worthy of her deepest commisera-

tion. She therefore took it as quite a matter of course when, at the end of all these outpourings and consolings, Wilberg seized her hand to imprint upon it a grateful kiss. There was certainly not the slightest danger that he loved any other than her ladyship.

Into this poetic scene the chief engineer now intruded with all the prose of his parental authority, and demanded to know why this overpowering of the heart had taken place below here in the vestibule, rather than up in the reception-room, where the presence of Melanie's mamma would certainly have laid some restraint upon it.

Herr Wilberg, conscious of the great wrong here done him, summoned all his self-possession.

"I have a message from Herr Berkow," he said in an explanatory tone.

"Ah, indeed! Your errand is different from what I supposed. Go upstairs, Melanie! You hear, do you not, that we have business matters to attend to?"

Melanie obeyed, and her father stood at the foot of the stairs, without, as usual, inviting the young officer into his dwelling, so that he was obliged to deliver his message here.

"Very well," said the chief engineer calmly. "The drawings in question stand at Herr Berkow's disposal. I will myself take them to him. And now a word to you, Wilberg. I have, in spite of a mutual antipathy, always done you justice." Herr Wilberg bowed. "I regard you as an especially

honorable officer"—Herr Wilberg bowed a second time—"but also as somewhat crack-brained."

The young man, who was about to bow a third time, started, and quite beside himself stared at his superior, who with imperturbable calmness of soul went on:

"Now, as to your mania for poetizing. It has not embraced me, you think? Well, I should hope not. You have, one after the other, sung Hartmann, her ladyship, and Herr Berkow. You can go on with this sort of thing if it gives you pleasure, but never let it occur to you to sing my Melanie. That I positively forbid. I will not have such nonsense put into the child's head. If you are really in need of a new object for your poetic outpourings, take me or the director. We stand at your service."

"I think I must decline your kind offer," said Wilberg, much piqued.

"As you please; but mark this: my daughter remains out of the game. If on any day a poem 'To Melanie' happens to fall into my hands, I shall make rough work with your iambuses and Alexandrines, or whatever the stuff is called. This is what I wished to say to you. Good-night!"

With these words the reckless superior officer took leave of our poet—who had been wounded in his holiest feelings—and went upstairs. His daughter came to meet him.

"Oh, papa!" she said, "how can you be so cruel and unjust to poor Wilberg? He is so unhappy."

The chief engineer laughed aloud.

"Unhappy? He? A most unhappy poet he is: those are horrible verses he strings together; but the more you seek to make this comprehensible to him, the more insanely he goes rhyming on. And then as for that kissing your hand——"

"Good heavens, papa! you are wholly and entirely in error," interrupted Melanie most decidedly. "It was only gratitude. He loves her ladyship, has loved her from the first moment he saw her—hopelessly, of course, as she is already married; but we can well understand that this makes him melancholy and that her departure has quite thrown him into despair."

"And so, solely on account of this melancholy and despair he kissed your hand? How strange! And besides, how do you know all this, Melanie? You seem in some extraordinary manner to have been initiated into the heart histories of this blond sheep."

The young lady lifted her head with a satisfaction she could not conceal.

"I am his *confidante*, papa," she said. "He has unburdened his whole heart to me. I would have consoled him, but he can accept no consolation; he is too unhappy."

"This is precious nonsense!" broke out the chief engineer angrily. "And so you have already got to confidences and outpourings of the heart, have you? I had not thought Wilberg so politic. Any one who begins to speculate upon the sympathies of you women—but we will make an end of this affair

in season. You will hereafter receive no such improper confidences, Melanie; and now, once and forever, I forbid all this consolatory nonsense. And first of all, I will take care that he does not enter the house again. You may rely upon that!"

Melanie turned pouting away. Her father showed no great knowledge of human nature if he really believed that with this dictatorial fiat he could exorcise the demon which had all at once loomed up before him in the form of a poetizing and guitar-playing son-in-law. He ought to have known that Melanie would now in sober earnest take upon herself the task of consoling this poor, sorely misunderstood Wilberg whenever and wherever occasion should offer, and that Herr Wilberg would that very evening sit down to compose a poem "To Melanie." Such things cannot be stopped by anybody's "Come, now, I won't have that!"

The day neared its close. In setting, the sun yet once more broke through the enveloping clouds, lighting up wood and mountain with a bright transient splendor only a few minutes; then the red ball of fire sank slowly down the horizon; and with it vanished the departing glory, the evanescent hues, for one fleeting moment lent to the earth.

Arthur Berkow had just opened the gate at the end of the park and was about to pass out, when he paused involuntarily and spell-bound gazed at the departing luminary. His face now wore an expression of the fullest repose, but it was a repose won

by bitter conflict, not that calmness into which a man uplifts himself when he casts from him a weakness victoriously overcome, in order to enter a new path. If one remains behind alone upon the sinking ship and in the distance sees the boat vanish which bears his best goods and treasures to some secure haven, while the ship itself incessantly nears the cliff against which it must be dashed in pieces—then, indeed, the man's courage may not falter, but he is no longer joyful. When the last hope has vanished, then comes the calm determination which is prepared and ready to brave all. This now lay upon Arthur's face. The dream was dreamed out and the immediate future emphatically demanded a full, perfect awakening.

He walked over the meadow, taking the path leading to the house of his superior officer. The broad trench lying along the upper side of the park crossed the meadow at this place, but while a tasteful bridge there marked the passage, here was only a plank, strong and safe, but so narrow that only one could go over it at a time. Arthur stepped hastily upon the plank, without remarking that another was coming over from the opposite side. He had already taken several steps, when he all at once stood before Ulrich Hartmann, who also seemed not to have perceived him until this moment. The young chief paused, supposing of course that his under-steiger would step back and let him pass. But Ulrich must always be provoking as possible. Whether he really sought a conflict or only obeyed

the impulse of his own obstinate nature matters not; there he stood immovable and gave no sign of turning back.

"Well, Hartmann, are we to remain standing here?" asked Arthur calmly after he had for some moments waited in vain. "The board is too narrow for two; one must go back."

"Must I be the one?" asked Ulrich sharply.

"I certainly thought so."

Hartmann seemed to have a defiant answer upon his lips, but all at once he bethought himself.

"Ah, yes; you are upon your own soil. I had forgotten that."

He stepped back and let Berkow pass; but when the chief reached the other side he paused.

"Hartmann!"

The man addressed, who was just stepping upon the plank, now turned around.

"I should have had you summoned to-day had I not feared giving reasons for misconception. But as we happen to meet here I would like to speak with you."

A glance of triumph shot over Ulrich's face. Then his features resumed their usual reticent expression.

"Here, upon the meadow?"

"The place is indifferent, and we are here alone."

Ulrich slowly advanced nearer and stationed himself opposite his chief, who leaned against one of the willows which bordered the edge of the trench. The night fog began to ascend from the meadow,

but the forest up yonder, where the sun had set, was still illumined by the twilight glow.

There was a strange contrast between these two—the slender, almost delicate figure of the young aristocrat; the pale face full of a quiet repose, with the large, thoughtful eyes, from which now had vanished that light which could give them a spell almost of fabulous enchantment; and the giant form of the workman, with the haughtily poised blond head, the face iron, like his muscles and sinews, and the fiery glance which with a sort of wild satisfaction sought to pierce the pale features of his rival, as if he suspected what lay behind them.

The instinct of jealousy had taught Ulrich to see and to understand where no one else saw anything, and if the whole world had declared that Arthur Berkow was cold and distant to his beautiful wife, that he had never felt the least affection for her, Ulrich knew that a man who called a being like Eugenie Windeg his own could not be indifferent to her. Since that morning when he had stood under the firs and gazed after the receding coach he had known what it means to lose such a being.

But in the midst of this agony of separation a proud triumph entered his soul. A wife who loves her husband does not leave him when all wavers and dissolves around him; and she had gone from him—had gone under the protection of her father and brother, leaving him back alone, resigning him a prey to all. This it was which had stricken the

proud Berkow, who was not to be crushed by hatred and threats, by the fear of violence and insurrection, by ruin itself. And even though with this calm forehead he deceived all others, he could not deceive his enemy. The blow had gone to his heart.

"I need not tell you what has happened of late," began Arthur: "you are just as well, even better informed than I. The other works have followed your example. To all appearance we are on the eve of a long conflict. Are you sure of your comrades?"

Ulrich was startled at the last question.

"What do you mean by that, Herr Berkow?"

"I was thinking whether we could manage things down here without outside assistance. It seems they cannot at the other mines. From the forges they have already called upon the State for help. You certainly know all about the outbreak there and can judge whether such help is necessary. I shall not resort to such means unless in the most extreme case, but such a case may occur. Already several of my officers have been insulted, and that crowd of your men I met the other day in the forest were on the point of insulting me. Make no calculations upon my patience or my weakness. Much as I wish to avoid extreme measures, I will meet violence with violence."

At the chief's first words Ulrich had glanced up in sullen astonishment. He had expected something far other than such a declaration, but the calmness with which it was made robbed it of all

its defiance and compelled even the rival to moderation. There was still a slight touch of irony in his voice as he replied:

"That is nothing new to me. Violence against violence! I knew from the first that some day it would come to this."

"And which bears the blame if it comes to this—the resistance of the many or the obstinacy of a single man?" asked Arthur, looking him steadily in the face.

"The obstinacy of a single man! Quite right, Herr Berkow. You know that at the cost of a single word from you your works would all be in activity to-morrow."

"And you know that I cannot speak this word, because it involves an impossibility. It is your duty to yield. I pledge you my honor to do all I have promised."

"Really?" cried the young miner, this time with a new outbreak of derision. "Is it because the whole province is in rebellion and we have a guard and a support in our comrades?"

Berkow, with a sudden movement, drew himself up to his full height and his eyes flashed.

"It is because we shall compel you by arms to respect that order which you now seek to tread under your feet, and because I would spare this result to my workmen. Have done with this irony, Hartmann, in which you yourself do not believe. Whatever has happened between us or may happen, I think we may each exculpate the other from the charge of cowardice."

There was again that same tone and glance as in the conference chamber. Ulrich, with mingled rage and admiration, gazed upon the young chief who in such an hour dared thus speak to him, when from the scene in the forest he must know what was to be feared from such a meeting. His words proved that he did know this perfectly, and yet he had to-day, of his own free will, sought this interview.

The park was quite deserted; no human being was to be seen upon the meadow and the houses lay far distant. None of the officers would have ventured upon a solitary meeting with Hartmann—not even the bold engineer; only the once-despised weakling dared this. Ah, yes! from the reproach of cowardice his rival had long since absolved him.

Arthur seemed to feel the impression he had made. He drew a step nearer.

"And do you not see, Hartmann, that by this behavior you are ruining your future?" he asked gravely. "You think, perhaps, by this last movement of your comrades to make an impression upon me. I allow myself to be influenced by no effort at compulsion; rely upon that: but I respect in you powerful though misguided abilities. They have hitherto been employed only to my injury; and yet through all I have seen what they could accomplish if not turned against me. Give ear now to the voice of reason; content yourself with the attainment of possibilities, and I gladly offer you liberty to remain upon my works and a free road to advancement. I know what I risk in this, in retain-

ing an element like you among my workmen; but I will risk it if my confidence can have a like return."

Such a proffer to a man wont to consider all concession as weakness was, indeed, venturesome enough; but Berkow seemed not to have reckoned upon this. Ulrich did not answer; he showed no signs of compliance; but, for a nature like his, it was a great concession not to immediately repel the offer with morose distrust.

"I have hitherto sought your confidence in vain," continued Arthur. "You have to this hour denied it me. I came here a stranger: if not to the place itself, to the mines and to you I was a stranger. You met me with a declaration of war, without even asking what I would be willing to change and improve. You received and have treated me as an enemy, without even once asking whether I would be your enemy."

"We are at war!" said Ulrich curtly. "There everything is fair."

Arthur lifted his face, just before so pale, but now flooded with the flaming glow of the twilight, whose reflection shone around both.

"Must it, then, be war between us? I do not mean the present quarrel, which will end sooner or later—I mean must this secret, imbittered warfare, this hardness and compulsion on the one side, this rancor and hatred on the other, keep endlessly coiling and spinning on? So it has been for years long. I know it; and so it will be again if force compels

you to yield. We should make peace before blood has been shed on both sides. We might now, since nothing has as yet happened: in a few days it will perhaps be too late."

With all its calmness, the voice of the young chief had a pathos that was very touching; and the passionate emotion of Hartmann's face betrayed that he had not been unsusceptible to this. The haughty miner who, the more he had become accustomed to rule his equals, suffered all the more from wounded pride and a fear of his superiors he could illy conceal, saw himself now placed upon an elevation no one as yet had granted him. He very well knew that Berkow would not have spoken in this manner with any other of his underlings, perhaps not even with his officers; that for this kind of treatment he must thank his individuality alone. The chief spoke to him as man to man of a matter upon which hung the weal or woe of both, and he might have been conquered had this chief been any other than Arthur Berkow. Ulrich's was far too lawless and passionate a nature to be able to do justice where he hated with his whole soul.

"To give our confidence has been made difficult enough for us," he said bitterly. "Your father has for all these years robbed us of so much that none at all is left for the son. I believe you, Herr Berkow, that your proffer does not arise from fear: of any other I would not believe this; of you I believe it. But as we both have decided to help ourselves, I think we will fight it out to the end. And one of us at the last will be sure to win."

"And your comrades? Will they take upon themselves all the care, the want, the misery, this fighting it out to the last will involve?"

"I cannot change matters. All I have done is for them."

"No, it is not done for them," said Arthur firmly, "but solely for the ambition of their leader, who would win the mastery for himself and then become to them a worse despot than their late hated master ever was. If you still believe in your so-called mission, Hartmann, you cannot deceive me with it, now that I see you cast aside as worthless all I hold myself ready to do for bettering the lot of your comrades. You refuse all my offers because you wish to attain a goal I but too well know. In the future you would dictate and have me and my officers powerless. Speaking in the name of a blindly obedient rabble, you would arrogate to yourself all the rights of a master and leave me only with the name. You do not so much wish the recognition of your party as the suppression of every other, and that is why you stake all upon this throw. You will lose it."

The speech to such a man was bold enough, and Ulrich trembled with rage.

"Ah! since you know all so exactly, Herr Berkow, well and good. You are quite right: the question is not merely one of higher wages and a little more safety in the mines. That may be enough for those who are anxious for only wife and children and know nothing more their whole life long. The

courageous ones among us seek more. We will have the reins in our hands: we will be respected as equals. This may be a hard lesson for our sovereign gentlemen to learn, but we are in the way of teaching it to them. We at last understand that it is our hands which win for you that wealth of which you alone enjoy the fruits. You have used our arms in slaves' work long enough, and now you shall learn to feel it."

The words were hurled forth with a fearful violence, as if every one of them were in itself a weapon to strike and to kill. The whole immeasurable passion of Ulrich Hartmann once more broke forth, and the whole hatred he felt for a class was for the moment directed against its one representative who stood before him.

Arthur's position was hazardous in the extreme as he stood opposite this man, who, the veins of his forehead swollen with rage and with clinched fists, seemed ready to let deeds follow his words.

But not even an eyelash trembled; not a step did Arthur retreat from that dangerous nearness. He stood there with that bearing of cold, proud repose, his large eyes steadily fixed upon his rival, as if with those eyes alone he had the power to vanquish him.

"I believe, Hartmann, you must for the present allow the reins to remain in the hands which are accustomed to them and are in a position to rule," he said. "That you will soon learn. By brute force you may raise insurrections and pull down

structures, but they cannot be built by this. Try to conduct the mines here with your own hands, if to those hands that hated element be wanting which gives direction to them, motive power to the machinery, and intellect to the work. And for the present that remains with us. Place yourself by the side of your equals, and men will not deny you your rights. What you now have to throw into the scale, weapons alone, will never secure you the leadership."

Ulrich sought to answer, but passion choked his voice. Arthur glanced over to the forest where the twilight glow was fading away into the darkness and turned to go.

"If I had before known that every word of reconciliation would be unavailing, I would not have sought this interview. I offer you peace and liberty to remain upon the works. Perhaps no other would have made such a concession, and it was difficult enough for me to force myself to it. But you have repulsed even this with scorn and hatred. You are determined to be my enemy. Well, so be it, then; but take upon yourself the responsibility of all that happens. I have done my best to prevent all this, but in vain. However the quarrel may end, we are now done with each other."

"*Glück auf!*" cried Hartmann morosely. The words sounded like cutting irony, as they indeed were at such a moment as this. The young chief seemed no longer to hear. He was already some

steps distant and now went in the direction of the houses.

Ulrich remained behind. Over his head swayed the willow branches as they moved to and fro in the evening wind; along the meadows crept a white vapor; and over the firs yonder burst a sudden glow, weird, ominous, and red as blood, and then faded slowly away.

The young man stared dumbly into the flaming evening sky. The ominous glow lay also upon his face.

"'We are done with each other?' Not yet, Herr Arthur Berkow: we are just beginning! I would not confess, even to myself, the cowardice that as yet has held me back. I would not venture to attack him when *she* was at his side. Now the path is clear: now we will balance our accounts!"

CHAPTER XVI.

In the Residence reigned all the varied life and activity of a summer's afternoon. Throngs of idle promenaders, of business people and workmen, in a perpetually changing tide, surged to and fro. There was an endless babel of voices, a rattling of cart and carriage wheels. From all sides rose eddying clouds of dust, and the glowing beams of the sun, already declining toward the west, lighted up the whole busy, animated scene.

At a front window of the Windeg house, which stood upon one of the principal streets, a young lady had stationed herself and was gazing down upon all this commotion, which she had almost forgotten in the solitude of her wooded mountains.

Eugenie had returned to her father's house, and all its inmates seemed inclined to blot from memory the brief period of her married life. In the family circle this topic was seldom touched upon, and then only when they spoke of the approaching divorce. In this respect the sons followed the example of their father, who seemed resolved that a dead oblivion should rest upon that event, while in secret he took the necessary steps the law of

divorce required. Until then the world was not to canvass the matter.

The servants and the few acquaintances at this time present in the Residence supposed that the young wife was making a brief visit to her family, rendered necessary by the distracted state of affairs at her husband's mines.

Eugenie again occupied the chamber which had been hers before her marriage. Nothing in its furniture or arrangements was changed, and as she now stood at the corner window, outside the well-known objects met her gaze, just as if she had never been absent. The last three months must and should be to her only a sad, oppressive dream, out of which she now awakened to the old freedom of her girlhood years and to a better freedom than before; for now the grim phantom of anxiety no longer brooded threateningly over every step taken by herself and her family; now every new day did not bring new humiliations and new sacrifices; now every hour of the home life was no longer haunted by the fear that perhaps before the morrow financial ruin, with all its terrible consequences, would have fallen upon them all. The old race of Windeg could again step forth in the full splendor of power and wealth. Whoever possessed the Rabenau estates was rich enough to cover all early losses and secure for himself and his a brilliant future.

In truth, one shadow yet brooded over all this new sunshine—the plebeian name so hated by the baron and once so hated by Eugenie. But this

could only be a question of time. The beautiful, intellectual girl had once, in spite of the well-known embarrassments of her father, found in her own circle many admirers who soon or late would have become wooers. Eugenie Windeg had been a girl to make a man forget that he took to his home and heart the daughter of an impoverished, insolvent family.

Old Berkow, with rough hand, had subverted all the baron's plans for a brilliant alliance for his daughter and wrested the prize for his son. His had been the power to demand where others must sue, and he had known how to use it.

But now Eugenie would again be free. The present lord of Rabenau could secure her a rich dowry, and he knew more than one man, her equal in birth, who would rejoice, and not from mercenary motives alone, to efface the name and last remembrance of that unfortunate alliance, and by a marriage worthy of her rank raise the young baroness to a position as high, and even higher than birth had given her. Then the last stain would be wiped from the Windeg escutcheon and it beam again in its ancient splendor.

But the young woman did not see things in the joyous, hopeful light one might have expected she would, now that the sun of her fortune shone so resplendent. She had already been some weeks in her father's house, but the color would not return to her cheeks nor her lips learn again their olden smile. Here in her own home, surrounded by the

fondest love and care of her family, she remained pale and silent as she had ever been by the side of the husband she had been forced to wed.

At this very moment she gazed upon the crowd below; but not one of these changing forms, in its ebbing and flowing tide, succeeded for a moment in fettering her attention. She gazed, but it was with that vacant, dreamy glance which, lost to the nearest surroundings, sees something entirely different and in a different place. "In your Residence one unlearns all, especially the longing after his woodland solitudes." These words seemed not to apply to her. Eugenie looked as if she was filled with a painful longing after them.

Before the horseback ride in which the baron usually indulged toward evening he was accustomed to come to his daughter. He came to-day, but his manner was more grave than usual, and he held a paper in his hand.

"I must annoy you with a business matter, my child," he began after a brief salutation. "I have just had a conference with our lawyer, which has proved satisfactory beyond my expectation. Berkow's attorney is endowed with full power to meet all our wishes; both legal gentlemen have already agreed upon the necessary steps; and the whole matter will probably be adjusted far more quickly and easily than we ventured to hope. Will you please sign your name to this paper?"

He reached her the paper. Eugenie made a movement as if to snatch it from him, but all at once her hand fell.

"What am I to do?"

"Simply to affix your name to this paper, nothing more!" said the baron coolly as he placed the sheet on the writing-table and moved her a chair. Eugenie hesitated.

"It is a legal document. Must I not first read it?"

Windeg smiled faintly.

"If it had been an important document we should, of course, have laid it before you for inspection," he said; "but it is only the petition for divorce, which the judge is to present in your name and to which he needs your signature—a mere formality in the conduct of the case. The details will follow hereafter. But if you wish to know the wording of this——"

"No, no!" interrupted the young woman evasively. "I do not wish that. I will sign the paper, but it need not be just at this moment. Just now I am not in the mood for it."

The baron looked very much surprised.

"*Mood?* Nothing is needed here but your signature. It will take but a moment, and I have promised our attorney to send him the paper to-day, as he intends to present it to-morrow."

"Well, then, this evening I will bring it to you with my signature. But not at this moment. I cannot sign it now."

The tone of the young woman's voice was singularly plaintive, almost agonized. The father shook his head as if in displeasure.

"This is a strange whim, Eugenie," he said, "one which I do not at all understand. Why will you not just now, here in my presence, make this simple stroke of the pen? But if you insist upon the delay, I rely upon your handing me back the document at tea this evening. There will then be time enough to send it away."

He did not remark his daughter's deep sigh of relief at these last words. He stepped to the window and gazed down the street.

"Will Curt not come to me?" asked Eugenie after a moment's pause. "I have seen him only once to-day, at the dinner-table."

"He must be weary from his journey and is perhaps taking some rest. Ah, there you are, Curt, just as we were speaking of you!"

The young baron, who entered at this moment, must have reckoned upon finding his sister alone, for he said with evident and not quite gratified surprise:

"*You* here, papa? I thought you were having a conference up in the library with our lawyer."

"Our conference is at an end, as you see," replied the baron.

Curt seemed to wish that the conference had been longer. Meantime he made no reply, but went to his sister and confidentially sat down by her side. Only to-day noon he had come unexpectedly from the province. It was a singular and, in the baron's opinion, an unfortunate circumstance that the regiment to which his eldest son belonged had just

been stationed in the town which lay nearest to the Berkow estates, just now, when his family had broken off all relations there.

It would be useless to request a long furlough for the young officer, as the riot just broken out among the miners had thrown the whole province into commotion. It was expected that the military would be called upon to quell the disturbance, and so Curt could not be spared for the present. He had gone to his new garrison, where, of course, Berkow was well known, with an express command from his father to be silent respecting the divorce. The baron held firmly to his first conclusion, to take the preliminary steps in secret, as he must the final ones in the face of the world; and he naturally supposed that his son would as much as possible avoid all personal relations with his brother-in-law.

He seemed to have been right in this supposition. Arthur's name was never mentioned in Curt's letters, and only casual intelligence had been received as to how matters stood upon the Berkow estates, until Curt, in a military capacity, was ordered to the Residence. Curt had been at home but a few hours, and at dinner the presence of guests had thrown a restraint upon the family; but now, when from his having just asked Eugenie's signature to the petition for divorce this usually forbidden topic was uppermost in the baron's mind, with an indifference one might show in relation to the affairs of the most distant acquaintance, he asked how matters stood upon the Berkow estates.

"Badly, papa, very badly!" replied Curt, turning to his father, but not relinquishing his place near Eugenie. "Arthur manfully resists the ruin which threatens him from all sides, but I fear he must at last yield. It is tenfold worse with him than with his colleagues at the other mines. He must now atone for all the sins his father committed in twenty years of tyranny and dishonesty, as well as bear the result of his senseless speculations during these later years. I do not understand how he has so long held his own in the conflict. Any other man would have been vanquished long ago."

"If the outbreak is getting beyond his mastery, I wonder that he does not summon military aid," said the baron rather coolly.

"That is the very point on which he will not listen to reason. I"—here all the aristocratic imperiousness of the young heir of Windeg broke out—"I would long ago have had those fellows shot down and have forced the rebels to submission. They have given provocation enough for it, and if their leader continues to goad them on, as he is now doing, they will the next thing burn Arthur's house over his head; but all this does not influence him. 'No, and no again,' he says; 'so long as I can defend myself no stranger force sets foot in my works.' Neither arguments nor entreaties move him. And to confess the truth, papa, we in our regiment are very glad our help is not likely to be asked. During the last few weeks we have been obliged to lend it only too often. It was not half

so bad at the other mines as at Berkow's; but still, at the very first their owners and officers placed themselves on a war footing with their own workmen and demanded military aid. Harrowing and violent scenes have taken place, and we soldiers have been compelled to extreme measures. It is best not to resort to violence when it can in any way be avoided; and still, on the other hand, a master should not give up his authority and let things go as they will, for he must be responsible for all that happens. Our colonel and officers have a high respect for Arthur, because he has thus far kept even with his rebels; and I think he will keep even with them, although things with him now are as bad as possible."

Breathlessly intent, Eugenie had listened to her brother, who seemed to believe her quite unconcerned in the matter, for his recital had been addressed to his father. But the baron, who with ever-increasing displeasure had remarked the term "Arthur" his son had repeatedly employed, said now in a tone of cold rebuke:

"You and your comrades seem to be very minutely informed of all Herr Berkow's affairs."

"Why, they are the talk of the whole town!" replied Curt naïvely. "As for myself, I have been over to Arthur's pretty often."

The baron sprang from his chair at this confession.

"You have visited him at his estates? and that very often?"

Whether the young officer had or had not remarked the emotion visible in Eugenie's face at his last words, he clasped her hand more firmly, and retaining his ingenuous tone answered:

"Well, yes, papa. You commanded me to be silent in regard to certain matters, and I might have been if in his present situation I could have fully ignored my brother-in-law. The driving out there was not forbidden me."

"Because I believed your own sense of propriety would have forbidden such a thing!" cried Baron Windeg in a towering rage. "I assumed that you would shun all intimacy with Berkow, but, on the contrary, you have really sought his society, as it appears, without even writing me a word about it. Really, Curt, this is past endurance."

Curt, to tell the truth, had feared a direct prohibition from his father and had therefore chosen to be silent concerning his visits to Arthur. He had usually a great awe of his father's angry moods, but to day Eugenie's presence seemed to counterbalance this awe. His eyes met hers, and what he saw there must have enabled him to bear the paternal displeasure, for he quite unconcernedly replied:

"Really, papa, I do not know why I have grown so attached to Arthur. You would have become so had you been in my place. He would be the most fascinating and amiable of men if he was not, just now, so terribly in earnest; but this earnestness really becomes him excellently well. Yesterday,

as we parted, I said to him, 'Arthur, if I had earlier thus known thee——'"

"Thee!" interrupted the baron with his sharpest emphasis.

The young officer scornfully threw back his head.

"Ah, yes! we are thee and thou to each other.* I begged him to call me so, and I do not see why we should not make use of that familiar pronoun. He is my brother-in-law."

"This brother-in-law ship must end," said the baron coldly as he pointed to the writing-table. "There lies the petition for divorce."

Curt threw a none too tender glance upon the designated sheet.

"Ah, yes, the divorce petition! Has Eugenie already signed it?"

"She is just about to do so."

The young man looked at his sister, whose hand now trembled in his and whose lips quivered with an anguish she could scarce repress.

"Well, papa, I thought that upon that point Arthur had so borne himself as to disarm all reproach and bitterness. It would be small in us now not to allow full justice to be rendered him. I could never have believed that a man of such energy could rise up out of such indolence as I have seen in him. One must see, in order to believe it, all that he has done in the last few weeks by being

* Among the Germans "thee" and "thou" are terms of familiarity, used only among relatives and intimate friends

everywhere and attending to everything at the right time. What terrible scenes and conflicts he has averted—he alone in the midst of a rebellious mob, merely through the power of his individuality. He has all at once become a hero—the colonel and his comrades, the whole town say that. His officers all conduct themselves excellently, because he leads them everywhere, and not a single one has left the works. But when I came away things seemed to have come to a most desperate pass. It is very unfortunate that Arthur is so determined to have no outside force step between him and his miners, and that he persists in this determination with all the strength of his iron will. I believe that if things come to the worst he and his officers will intrench themselves in the house and there fight till the last man falls before he will call on us for help. That would be just like him."

Here Eugenie snatched her hand from her brother's and, rising suddenly, went to the window. The baron also rose with an expression of lively displeasure.

"I do not know, Curt," he said, "why you feel called upon to answer a simple question as to the position of affairs upon Berkow's estate with such extravagant praises of him. It shows a want of consideration for your sister, which I should least of all have imputed to you, who have always seemed to love her with such especial tenderness. I leave it to yourself to determine what, under existing circumstances, you will do with your eccentric

admiration for this man, which you seem to have so openly displayed in your garrison. For the present, I beg that our conversation may end. You see how painfully it has affected Eugenie. You will now ride out with me."

"Let Curt remain here just a few moments, papa," pleaded Eugenie in a low voice. "I would like to ask him something."

The baron shrugged his shoulders.

"Very well," he said; "but I hope he will at least have the goodness not to allude again to this subject, which has so painfully excited you. In ten minutes the horses will be in readiness. Curt, I shall then positively expect you."

The door had scarce closed when the young officer hastened to join his sister at the window, and with uncontrollable, though somewhat violent, tenderness placed his arm around her.

"Are you, too, angry with me, Eugenie?" he asked. "Was I really inconsiderate?"

The young woman, with passionate intentness, raised her eyes to him.

"You have been with Arthur—you have often spoken with him. Only yesterday at your departure you saw him. Did he send no message at all by you?"

Curt cast down his eyes.

"He sent his compliments to you and papa," he said somewhat hesitatingly.

"In what way? What did he say to you?"

"He hurried after me when I had already taken

my seat in the carriage. 'Give my compliments to the Herr Baron and to your sister,' he said."

"And that was all?"

"All."

Eugenie turned away. She would not have her brother see the deep disappointment portrayed in her features, but Curt held her fast. He had the beautiful dark eyes of his sister, only their expression was more lively and joyous; but at this moment as he bent low down to her this had all vanished before his unwonted gravity.

"You certainly must at one time have wounded him very deeply, Eugenie, and in a way he can never forget. I would so gladly have brought you a line, a parting word; but that was not to be obtained from him. He would never answer when I spoke your name, but every time he became deadly pale and turned away and almost peremptorily passed to another subject, so as only to hear nothing more of this, just as you used to do when I spoke to you of him. My God! does he really hate you so much?"

Eugenie, with a passionate gesture, broke loose from his arms.

"Leave me, Curt, for God's sake, leave me!" she cried. "I can bear it no longer."

An expression, half-triumph, flitted over the young officer's face, and there was a tone almost of suppressed exultation in his voice.

"Well, I will not intrude into your secrets," he said. "I must now go. Papa will be impatient:

he is already in such a bad humor. I suppose I ought to leave you alone now, Eugenie. You still have to sign the divorce petition. When we return you will perhaps have done so. Good-by."

He hurried away. The horses stood waiting down in the court, and the baron was looking impatiently up to the window. The horseback ride this afternoon was not the pleasantest, for the baron was in ill-humor and vented his displeasure upon his sons. He could not endure that any one bearing the name of Berkow should be praised in his presence, and as he naturally presupposed the same thing in regard to his daughter, he felt that both himself and she had reason to be offended; and Curt had to hear quite a lecture upon his want of tact and consideration.

But Curt took the lecture very calmly, not appearing to feel the slightest remorse: on the contrary, he manifested a lively interest in the ride, and even more in its duration. It was so long since he had been in the Residence; he found the very animated promenades so entertaining; and he succeeded in so prolonging the excursion that it was nearly dark when the four gentlemen returned to the city.

Eugenie, meantime, had remained quite alone. The door of her room was closed: she could not and would not now suffer any intrusion. The walls of her chamber and the old family pictures which adorned them had witnessed many tears, many bitter hours, at that time when preparations were

making for the young girl's marriage, but yet none so bitter as to-day; for to-day it was a struggle with her very self, and the enemy was not very easy to conquer.

There upon the writing-table lay the paper in which a wife demanded legal separation from her husband; only the signature to it was wanting. When the signature was affixed the divorce was consummated, for the husband's consent, as well as the position and influence of the baron, insured to the affair a speedy and prosperous issue.

Just before, in her father's presence, she had hesitated about making that momentous pen-stroke; but now it must be done. What did it help—this single hour's delay? It was all the same whether the irrevocable happened soon or late. But just at this hour Curt had come, and with his story had torn open the wound which had in truth never yet ceased to bleed.

And still her brother could not bring with him a word, not even a greeting. "Give my compliments to the baron and your sister." This was all. Why not have said, "My compliments to her ladyship?" This would have been still more icy, still more formal. Eugenie stepped to her writing-table, and her eyes wandered over the words of the document. All there was so cold, so formal, and still these few brief words decided the future of two beings.

But Arthur had willed all this. He it was who had first spoken the word of separation; he who had first and ruthlessly assented to hastening the

decree; and when she had gone to him and declared herself ready to remain, he had turned coldly away and bidden her go.

As she thought of this the blood again mounted to her temples and her hand reached after the pen. She was still woman enough to know what this signature meant for him had he been the one obliged to set it there: she well knew how to interpret those glances when in unguarded moments he had betrayed himself. But to the last moment he had remained conqueror over this weakness, and he would not understand the hint by which she had signified to him the possibility of a reconciliation. He had set pride against pride, scorn against scorn, for all which he must now suffer; but she must suffer tenfold more. Better make two beings miserable than confess that one had done the other wrong.

The demon of pride again asserted itself in her soul with all its fatal might. How often had it obstinately kept the field in defiance of every better emotion, although seldom in blessing for herself or others. But to-day with its voice blended still another, "Arthur manfully seeks to stay the tide of ruin which threatens him from all sides, but I fear he must yield at last."

And if he did yield vanquished he was vanquished alone—alone as he had stood during the whole struggle. He had no friend, no relative—not a single one. However loyal his officers might be to him, however much his friends might now admire

him, no one loved him; and the wife, whose place was at his side—she was at this moment to sign the paper demanding immediate separation from the husband she had already forsaken and who now day by day wrestled with ruin. Eugenie let the paper fall and stepped back from the writing-table. What, then, upon the whole, had been Arthur's fault? He had shown himself neglectful, indifferent to the wife who, he believed, had been enticed by his wealth alone to a marriage of convenience; and when this wife had made known to him the real, impelling motive of her marriage, she had treated him with a contempt no man could bear while a spark of manhood remained in his breast. Here, too, he was forced to expiate his father's sins; and in his brief wedded life he had richly expiated them.

Since that conversation Eugenie's life had been a blank: her husband, cold and reticent, had isolated himself from her. What had those days brought to him?

Eugenie best knew the true significance of that life during those three months, in which the casual observer would have seen only a calm, superficial indifference. But this indifference had carried with it a perpetual sting—enough to drive a man to extremities. One can insult another with every breath and every glance, and she had done this.

With all the arrogance of her birth and her position she had sought to force him back into the nothingness and pitiableness where in her opinion he

belonged. Day after day she had used her weapons, and used them only the more recklessly when she saw that they wounded. She had made his home a hell, his marriage a curse, in order to avenge herself on him for his father's dishonorable dealings with her family. She had designedly goaded him on until he had at last demanded a divorce because he could no longer endure this life at her side. If he now rose in his might and thrust from him the hand which had so often tortured and tormented him, who was to blame?

The young woman sprang from the chair on which she had thrown herself and in terrible excitement paced up and down as if to flee from her own thoughts. She knew only too well what they sought—to what they would drive her. There was only one step which could help and rescue her, and that was impossible for her to take.

And supposing she made that giant sacrifice of all her pride and it was not accepted fully and entirely as she gave it? Might she not have deceived herself? Might she not have read falsely in those eyes which had never but for a moment, and then unwittingly, been unveiled to her? Supposing that glance should again meet her—that icy glance with which he had asked after her right to do what every other wife assumes as a sacred duty? Supposing he should again say to her that he would stand and fall alone and for the second time bid her go? Never—no, never! Rather endure the separation, rather take upon herself a life full of misery and torture than the possibility of such humiliation!

The evening sun, whose reflection still gilded the distant tree-tops, had long since set: the twilight was falling, but it brought no coolness or quiet to the hot, crowded streets. On the sultry evening air outside was borne a continuous hum of voices and echo of footsteps and roll of carriage-wheels. The human tide ebbed and flowed unceasingly, and its loud, bewildering murmurs rose to the window where Eugenie stood. But amid all these discordant sounds there toned in her ear another voice—at first only distant and indistinct; then ever nearer, ever louder.

Did it come from the green wooded mountains? Had it fought its way through the eternal surgings of the city's tumultuous waves hither to this young wife? What it was she did not know; but it sounded like the swaying of fir boughs, like the murmur of the forest with its mysterious accords; and with it there arose within her soul the whole sweet yet bitter woe of those minutes lived under the firs. Again the fog rose and fell, and the storm roared, and the brook dashed madly on; and from out of that gray veil rose clearly and distinctly the one form which ever since, in waking or dreaming, had never been absent from her side. And those large brown eyes gazed upon her gravely and reproachfully.

Whoever has fought through a conflict where all the soul's strength was strained to the utmost in wrestling against some ever-growing decision knows such memories, which come all at once, without any

outside connection or incitement, but with an almightiness which nothing can withstand.

Such memories Eugenie now felt hovering around her: one weapon after another was wrested from her hand, until at last nothing remained—nothing but the spell of that hour in which she had first felt that hatred was at an end, that some new sentiment had awakened in its place—a sentiment against which she had waged a life-and-death conflict, but which had at last conquered.

There was one last brief struggle between the old demon of bitter, relentless pride, which could not forget the rebuff it had once received, and the woman's heart, which, in spite of all, knew itself beloved. This time the forest voices had not spoken in vain: they had won the final victory. The sheet which was to separate two beings who had sworn eternally to belong to each other lay torn in two upon the floor, and the young wife was upon her knees, her uplifted face bathed in scalding tears.

"I cannot," she cried—"I cannot do this wrong to him and me! It alike concerns us both. Come what will, Arthur, I remain with you!"

"Where is Eugenie?" asked the baron as an hour lated he joined his sons in the lighted parlors. "Has any one informed her ladyship that we are waiting for her?" he added, turning to the servant who had just arranged the tea-table and was about to leave the room.

Curt anticipated the answer.

"Eugenie is not at home, papa," he said, motioning to the servant to withdraw.

"Not at home!" repeated the baron in astonishment. "Has she driven out at this late hour? and where?"

"That I cannot tell you," replied Curt. "Immediately upon dismounting from my horse I went up to her room. She was not there, but I found this on the floor."

He drew forth a paper, and a peculiar smile played around his lips as, with great apparent gravity, he proceeded to fit the two halves of the sheet together, so as to lay it before his father, who looked on without the least suspicion.

"This is our attorney's draft of the divorce petition which I handed to Eugenie for her signature," said the baron; "but the signature is still wanting, I see."

"No, the thing is not signed," said Curt with the most innocent air in the world; "but it is torn in two. How strange! Just look here, papa!"

"What does this mean?" asked Windeg in the greatest astonishment. "Where can Eugenie be? I will ask the servants. If she has driven out they must know when the carriage was ordered."

He was about to place his hand upon the bell, when Curt said quietly:

"I believe she has gone to her husband."

"Are you out of your senses, Curt?" exclaimed the baron. "Eugenie gone to her husband!"

"Well, I can only suppose so; but we can very

easily determine, for upon her writing-desk lay this note addressed to you. Here it is, and it must contain the desired information."

Baron Windeg tore off the envelope, and in his haste did not remark that Curt, with a shocking disregard of etiquette, stepped behind him and read the note over his shoulder. As he read, the young officer's features showed such undisguised triumph that his two younger brothers, who understood nothing of the scene, glanced inquiringly first at him and then at their father.

The note contained only a few lines:

"I am going to my husband. Forgive me, papa, for this sudden and secret departure, but I do not wish to lose an hour and I cannot wait to encounter your opposition, which could not move me, for my resolution is fixed. Take no further steps in the divorce business: recall those already taken. I refuse my consent to them. I will not leave Arthur! EUGENIE."

"Was such a thing ever heard of?" broke out the baron as he let the note fall on the floor. "A defiance of my wishes, a deliberate flight out of my house, and that my own daughter offers me! She thus breaks loose from my protection, from my plans and hopes for her future, and returns to this Berkow. Now when he is on the verge of ruin, when his workmen are in rebellion and anarchy reigns upon his estates, she goes to him! Why, such a proceeding borders upon madness! I must

know what has brought it about; but first I must frustrate this senseless conclusion while there is yet time. I will this moment——"

"The express train to R—— has been gone an hour," interrupted Curt laconically. "The carriage, too, seems to have just returned from the station. In any event, it is too late."

In fact, they at this very moment heard the carriage in which the young woman must have gone drive into the portal below. The baron saw that it was indeed too late, and turned the full tide of his anger against his son Curt, whom he reproached with being alone in fault. By his foolish praise of his brother-in-law and his exaggerated account of the dangers of his position he had so aroused Eugenie's conscience that a false feeling of duty had impelled her to hasten to her husband. She had gone only because she believed him unhappy; but when once there, who could tell if they would not at last come to a full reconciliation? Most certainly they would if Berkow was egotistic enough to accept the proffered sacrifice.

By all that was sacred, the baron swore to carry through the divorce in spite of opposition. The initiatory steps had been taken, the lawyers already had the case in their hands, and Eugenie must and should come back to reason. He, her father, would see if he could not enforce his paternal authority, and if his two children—here he threw an annihilating glance upon poor Curt, with whom he was alone for the moment—seemed so entirely to disregard it.

Curt let the whole storm pass over him without offering a syllable in self-justification. He knew from experience that this was his best course. His bowed head and downcast eyes seemed to indicate that he was suffering great remorse for his thoughtlessness and the wrong it had done. But as the still enraged baron left the *salòn*, in his own chamber to brood over this unheard-of affair, the young officer suddenly sprang up, and the jubilant expression of his handsome face and the laughing eyes gave proof how little the paternal anger had gone to his heart.

"To-morrow morning Eugenie will be with her husband," said he to his two brothers, who now besieged him with questions. "Then let papa just once try to intrude with his paternal authority and his lawyers! Arthur will protect his wife as soon as he knows that she belongs to him: as yet he has not known this. In truth, we"—here Curt threw a wary glance to the door behind which his father had vanished—"we shall have storms for a week, perhaps, and the most violent of all will come when papa first perceives the mutual relations between Arthur and Eugenie, and that they are now influenced by other motives than conscience and sense of duty—that they are now in the full sunshine of happiness, and that, with Eugenie by his side, Arthur will fight his way through all obstacles. Thank God! we are free from the divorce trial, lawyers and all; and any one who now says a word to me against my brother-in-law shall answer for it."

CHAPTER XVII.

Early the next forenoon the post-chaise from R—— to the Berkow estates halted at the entrance of the valley in which the works were situated and in sight of the nearest houses.

"Do not attempt to go on, your ladyship," said the coachman, making his appearance at the door. "You had better turn back with me, as I begged you at the last station. The peasant we have just met confirms the news already heard: to-day there will be riot and murder at the mines. Early this morning the miners started out from the villages, and all is in confusion. Much as I wish to drive with you to the house, I cannot, without risking coach and horses. The men in revolt up yonder will spare neither friend nor foe. You must not go over to-day: wait until to-morrow."

The young woman, who sat quite alone in the coach, instead of answering, opened the door and stepped out.

"I cannot wait," she said gravely; "but I will not endanger you and your equipage. In a quarter of an hour I can very well go the distance on foot. You can turn back."

The coachman wearied himself with warnings

and expostulations. He thought it very strange that this aristocratic lady, who with lavish drinking-money had urged him on to the utmost possible speed, should now venture, so entirely alone, out into the midst of the tumult. But all his well-meant representations were repaid only by an impatient gesture for him to depart, and at length, shrugging his shoulders, he turned and went.

Eugenie entered a foot-path, which, without touching the works, led over the meadow to the end of the park, and which, apparently, was as yet safe. In case of need she could find society and protection in the officers' dwellings which lay along in that direction.

She had not known how necessary both might be when, following the impulse of the moment, she had undertaken the journey here alone, and even now she did not know the whole magnitude of the danger which beset her in this walk. It was not the possibility of danger which gave her cheeks their high color, her eyes their restless light, and made her breast heave so violently that she sometimes had to pause for breath: it was fear of the separation.

The heavy dream which had oppressed her as she left her husband's house could not have vanished during that whole period of absence. The home of her childhood, the love of her family, the siren voices of the new life and happiness had not availed to awaken her from it: the dream had remained, with its dull pain and its undefined longing. Now

at last should the awakening come; and all the thoughts, all the emotions of the young wife were compressed into this one question: "How will he receive me?"

She had just reached a small house, standing alone and forming, as it were, the outpost of the works, when a man, emerging from it, hastily approached, but at sight of her drew back in visible terror.

"For God's sake, your ladyship, how came you here, and above all to-day?"

"Ah, Overseer Hartmann! is it you?" said Eugenie, advancing to meet him. "Thank Heaven that I have met you just now," she added. "Revolt has broken out upon the works, I hear. I left the post-chaise down yonder, as the driver did not dare go on. I can now reach the house on foot."

The overseer made a quick warning gesture.

"That cannot be, your ladyship: it will not do now. Perhaps to-morrow, or toward evening to-day, only not now."

"And why not now?" interrupted Eugenie, turning pale. "Is our house threatened? My husband——"

"No, no; to-day Herr Berkow is in no danger: he is in the house with his officers. This time the revolt has broken out among us. This morning a part of the miners wanted to go to work again, but my son"—here a quiver of pain passed over the old man's face—"well, you will soon know how matters stand. Ulrich is in a rage. He and his

underlings have driven the workmen back and now hold possession of the mines. The vanquished party are not going to submit to this, and they are plotting together. The entire works are in revolt and comrade is arrayed against comrade. Merciful God! what will be the end of this?"

The overseer wrung his hands. Eugenie now understood the wild commotion up yonder; the sounds of strife that, despite the distance, were plainly audible to her.

"I intend to shun the works," returned she. "I wish to cross the meadow to the park, and from there——"

"For Heaven's sake do not go there!" interrupted the old man. "Ulrich is there with his whole party: they are holding a council upon the meadow. I was just going over there to beg him once more to come back to reason and at least leave the mines free. Now the fight is against our own flesh and blood; but in his fury he neither sees nor hears anything. Do not go that way, my lady: it is the worst."

"I must reach the house," declared Eugenie decidedly, "cost what it will. Go with me only to the officers' dwellings, Hartmann. If necessary I will remain there until the path is free, and at your side I shall be secure from danger."

The old man anxiously shook his head.

"I cannot help your ladyship," he said. "To-day, when one stands arrayed against the other, amid all the tumult I am scarce secure of my own

life; and if you should be recognized it would avail you little that I was at your side. There is only one person who can assure you respectful treatment—one whom they will obey; and he hates Herr Berkow with a deadly hatred and hates you because you are his wife. Righteous God! there he comes! Something has happened to displease him: I see it in his face. Keep out of his sight just now, I implore you."

He pushed the young woman through the half-open door of the little house, for already steps and loud, passionate voices were heard close by. Ulrich, accompanied by Lorenz and some other miners, came on without remarking his father. His face was flaming red; upon his forehead lay a thunder-cloud, which every moment threatened to burst forth; and his voice rang out in the wildest excitement.

"And if they are our comrades, or even our brothers, down with them as soon as they become traitors to us! We have pledged our word to stand one by the other, and now they would cowardly submit and abandon us and the whole movement. They shall have their pay for this. Have you taken possession of the mines?"

"Yes; but——"

"No buts!" said the young leader imperiously to the miner who allowed himself this pretext. "There must not be treason in our own ranks now, when we stand so near to victory. You will drive them back, I tell you, as soon as they seek to come

on. They shall learn where their place and their duty now is, even though they learn it with bloody heads."

"But there are two hundred of them," said Lorenz gravely. "To-morrow there will be four hundred; and if the chief should interfere and make a speech to them, you know what effect that would have. We have learned this often enough of late."

"And if there were four hundred—even if it was half of the workmen, we would compel them to submission with the other half!" cried Ulrich furiously. "I will see if I can no longer be obeyed. But now forward! Carl, you must go over to the works and bring me news whether Berkow has again been interfering—if with his d——d eloquence he has not again made hundreds wavering. You others, go back to the mines. See that they are fully guarded and allow no one there who does not belong to us. I will follow immediately. Go!"

The command was instantly obeyed. The miners hastened in the direction ordered, and Ulrich, who now for the first time saw that his father was present, went hastily up to him.

"You here, father? You should rather——"

He paused suddenly. His feet seemed rooted to the ground; the face, just now so flushed, became white as if every drop of blood had left it, and the eyes opened wide and staring as if they saw a spirit. Eugenie had stepped out of the door and stood right before him.

Into the young woman's head had flashed an idea which she carried out that very moment. She did not think of the daring, even danger of her venture. She would go to her husband at any price, and therefore she overcame the horror with which this man had inspired her since she knew upon what her power over him was based. Once more she would use this power, whose effect she had already so often proved.

"It is I, Hartmann," she said, mastering an involuntary tremor and speaking with the fullest apparent calmness. "Your father has just warned me against taking the path alone, and still I must go on."

At the sound of her voice Ulrich seemed first to comprehend that it really was Eugenie Berkow who stood there before him, and not a vision of his excited fancy. Passionately he advanced a few steps toward her, but Eugenie's voice and glance still exercised the old power over him, and a gleam of mildness and repose now overspread his features.

"What do you wish here, my lady?" he asked excitedly; but the tone just now so rough and imperious was changed. It had almost a touch of weakness. "Things go badly with us to-day. This is no place for women, least of all for you. You must not remain here."

"I wish to go to my husband," said Eugenie quickly.

"To—your husband?" repeated Ulrich. "Indeed!"

It was the first time the young wife had used this designation. She had always hitherto said "Herr Berkow," and Ulrich seemed to suspect what lay in this one word. In his first surprise he had not thought why she had come here so suddenly or in what way she could possibly have done this. Now he threw a hasty glance upon her traveling-dress and a second around him, as if to seek the carriage or escort.

"I am alone," explained Eugenie, who understood this glance; "and it is just that which forbids my going on. I do not fear the danger: it is the insults to which I might be exposed. You have once offered me your protection and your company, Hartmann, where I did not need them; now I lay claim to both. Conduct me safely over to the house. You can do it."

The overseer had thus far stood anxiously to one side; he expected every moment some attack from his son against the wife of the chief he so hated, and was ready in case of need to interfere. He could not understand the calmness and fearlessness of this young woman in presence of a man whom every one knew to be the inciter of the whole revolt, and now as she made this request of him and would confide herself to his protection, the old man's self-possession left him; he gazed in real terror up to her face.

But Ulrich also was terribly excited at this demand. The momentary expression of mildness and submission had already vanished, and the old imperious obstinacy had returned.

"Shall *I* conduct you over?" he asked in a hollow voice. "And do you ask this from me, your ladyship—from *me?*"

"From *you!*"

Eugenie did not take her eyes from his face. She knew that in them her whole might lay; but here she seemed to stand at the utmost limit of this might. Ulrich started up like a madman.

"Never! no, never! Rather would I let the house be stormed, let all go to ruin, than take you over there. Shall he have courage to resist us to the death because you are at his side? Shall he triumph when he sees that you have come here alone from the Residence, quite alone, and through all this danger, only so that he be not left solitary? For this you must seek another guide; and if you find that other"—here he gave his father a threatening side glance—"he would not go far with you. I should care for that."

"Ulrich, for God's sake restrain yourself: it is a woman!" cried the overseer, stepping between the two in mortal terror.

He naturally saw in this scene only the outbreak of that reckless hostility which his son had long nursed against the whole Berkow family, and therefore he placed himself protectingly before the young woman, who gently but decidedly pushed him back.

"Then you will not accompany me, Hartmann?"

"No, and ten times no!"

"Well, then, I will go alone."

She turned in the direction of the park, but with two steps Ulrich had reached her and placed himself in her way.

"Go back, your ladyship! You cannot get through, I tell you, and least of all where my comrades are. Woman or not, that is all the same. Your name is Berkow and that suffices them. As soon as you are recognized they will all attack you. You cannot and you shall not go over now. You remain here!"

He hurled the last words at her with a voice of threatening command, but Eugenie was not accustomed to allow others to command her, and the almost insane violence with which he endeavored to keep her from Arthur called forth a nameless anguish in her soul; it must be worse with him than they had told her.

"I will go to my husband," she repeated with the utmost energy. "I will see if they can forcibly block up my way to him. Let your comrades lay hands upon a woman! Give the signal for attack yourself if you would take the responsibility of this heroic deed. I am going."

And she went. She hastened past him and took the meadow path. Hartmann stood there and looked after her with glowing eyes, without listening to the entreaties or representations of his father. Ulrich knew better than he what the young woman had in view by this venture—to what she would force him; but this time he would not yield. And if she went to ruin on the threshold of her home,

in sight of her husband, before he himself conducted her to the arms of the hated man, before——

Up yonder appeared a crowd of miners who, shouting and raging, pressed near their leader. The foremost were only a few hundred steps distant; already they had noticed that solitary woman's form; the next minute she must be recognized, and only half an hour before he had himself inspired these men with a blind fury against all which bore the name of Berkow. Eugenie went on, right into the midst of danger, without even veiling her face. Ulrich stamped as if beside himself; then all at once he broke loose from his father and the next moment he was at her side.

"Put down your veil!" he commanded her, and with iron grasp placed his hand upon hers.

With a deep sigh of relief Eugenie obeyed. Now she was safe. She knew that he would not again let go her hand, even if the whole force of miners broke loose against her. With full consciousness she had escaped the danger, but also with the full conviction that only this momentary danger to which she had exposed herself could have enforced the protection he had denied her. She had conquered, but it had been only at the last moment.

They had now reached the crowd, which made a movement as if to surround their leader, but a brief yet most emphatic command from him bade them give way and start at once for the mines. Their obedience was, as usual, unquestioning and unhesitating; and Ulrich, who had not halted for a

moment, drew his companion swiftly onward. Now for the first time she saw how impossible it would have been to pass through this crowd alone, or indeed with any other escort than the man at her side.

The whole expanse of the meadow, usually so silent, was to-day the theater of a violent tumult, although the only conflict had taken place at the mines. Throngs of miners passed to and fro or gathered in wildly excitedg roups; everywhere were angry faces and threatening gestures; everywhere shouting, confusion, and uproar. The wildly excited mob seemed to seek only an object upon which to wreak its whole lust for vengeance. Happily, the foot-path led along the edge of the meadow, a little away from the immediate scene of the tumult; but even here Ulrich, as soon as he appeared, became the center of general attention.

But a strange surprise mingled with the uproarious shouts which everywhere greeted him. Many wondering, distrustful glances fell upon the woman at his side. In her dark traveling-suit and behind her thick veil no one had recognized the wife of the chief, and if from her gait or bearing any one had imagined it to be her ladyship, the supposition, if made audible to the crowd, would have been scouted with derisive laughter. It was Ulrich Hartmann who had taken her under his protection, and he certainly would protect nothing which belonged to the house of Berkow. But it was still a lady who walked near him—near this rough, wild son of the

overseer, who was not wont to concern himself about women, not even about Martha Ewers, an object of interest to every unmarried miner upon the works. Could this be Ulrich Hartmann, who regarded and treated the wives of his comrades as a superfluous burden to be shaken off as much as possible—could this indeed be he who accompanied this strange lady, and with an expression upon his face as if he would fell any man who approached a step too near? Who was the lady? and what did it mean?

This short walk of scarce ten minutes was a venture even for the young leader, but he showed that he was absolute master of his comrades and knew how to use his authority. Now, with some imperious words, he dispersed a group which stood in his way; now he hurled commands or directions to the crowd pressing on toward him, which made it take another course; now he dismissed the solitary individuals who came with questions or tidings with a "By and by" or "Wait until I return;" and amid all he kept drawing on the young woman so rapidly as to prevent discovery. At length they reached the latticed gate at the entrance of the park. Ulrich pushed open the gate and led Eugenie under the protection of the trees.

"I have gone far enough with you," said he, letting go her hand. "The park is yet safe, and in five minutes you will be at the house."

Eugenie still trembled at thought of the danger she had just escaped, and her hand still ached from

the iron pressure of his. Slowly she threw back her veil and looked up into the face of her protector.

"Now be sure to hasten, your ladyship," said he with bitter irony. "I have honorably aided you to see your husband again. You will not keep him waiting."

The young miner's face betrayed what torture she had inflicted upon him as she left him the choice of exposing her to attack or of conducting her to her husband. The young woman had not the courage to thank him. Silently she extended to him her hand.

But Ulrich thrust back the hand.

"You have dared demand much from me, my lady," he said, "so much that you came near losing all. Now you have your will; but do not again seek to compel me, as to-day, at least when *he* is near. If you do, then, by Heaven, I will give you both up to the mercy of the mob!"

Upon the terrace stood Franz and Anton, with anxious yet curious faces, gazing over to the works. As their lady, whom they had supposed safe in the Residence, suddenly stood before them, without the sound of carriage-wheels having been heard, without her maid or any other company, they started back in no less terror than the overseer when, just before, she had appeared to him.

She could not have come through the works, still less through the park, they thought; for behind there, upon the meadow, the tumult was at its

height; and yet she was here! Both servants were so confounded that they could scarce answer their lady's hurried questions; but Eugenie learned that Herr Berkow was just now in the house and hastened up the steps.

Franz, who followed her, found still more occasion to wonder at her ladyship, for when she had arrived in the antechamber she scarce allowed him to take her hat and cloak. As he was hastening to the wing occupied by Herr Berkow to announce her arrival she ordered him back, saying that she would go to her husband at once and without announcement. With the traveling-cloak still in his hands, Franz stood there and gazed after his mistress in open-mouthed wonder. This had all come like a clap of thunder. What could have happened in the Residence?

Eugenie passed quickly through the hall and the two anterooms; then she suddenly paused, for from the adjoining cabinet she heard Arthur's voice. The young wife had certainly reckoned upon finding her husband alone, and now she found him in the company of another. This meeting must not take place in the presence of strangers: anything but that! Still hesitating as to whether she should turn back or remain, she at length stepped softly behind the *portière*, whose folds concealed her from view.

"It is impossible, Herr Berkow," said the clear, sharp voice of the chief engineer. "If you still allow yourself to be ruled by such forbearance, all

you have now begun to bring back to order will turn against you. Hartmann's party has this time withdrawn from the field because it is the weaker; but the scene of this morning will be repeated, and with greater violence when we have something more to deal with than a mere fight with unarmed men. Hartmann has shown that he will not spare his own comrades if they rebel against his terrorism. In carrying out his obstinate designs he is regardless alike of friend and foe."

The open door gave Eugenie an unobstructed view of the room. Arthur stood directly opposite her at the open window, and the full light fell upon his face, which had grown strangely sad since she saw him last. The shadow of care, which at that time had lain upon the forehead as yet so little accustomed to wear it, had now engraven itself there in two deep folds which no after-time could perhaps obliterate. Every line of the face had become sharper and stronger. The expression of energy, which at its first dawning had been noticeable only in moments of excitement, now absolutely predominated and had quite obliterated the former listless, dreamy look. It was evident that in a few weeks the young chief had learned what would for others be the work of years.

"I am certainly the last man who would advise outside assistance," continued the chief engineer, "but I think we all, and particularly our chief, have done enough to restrain the revolt. We certainly cannot be blamed for resorting to a

measure the other works took long ago, and with no such urgent necessity as ours."

Arthur gravely shook his head and replied:

"The other works can be no rule for us. There a few wounds and imprisonments settled all; there fifty soldiers and a few shots fired into the air sufficed to put down the whole revolt. Here Hartmann stands at the head, and we all know what that means. He himself would not quail before a bayonet-charge, and with him also stand or fall his entire band of followers. If we should resort to military force, peace for us could only come over the bodies of the slain."

The officer was silent, but his deep gravity proved that he fully shared the apprehensions of his chief.

"But if peace is not to be obtained otherwise——" began he again.

"If it could be obtained in that way," returned Arthur; "but it cannot, and the sacrifice would be in vain. For the moment I might subdue the insurrection, only to have it the next year, perhaps the next month, break forth anew; and you know as well as I that this will take from me the last possibility of holding the works. In other places the workmen show some leaning toward justice and confidence; in other places they begin to return to reason; with us nothing of this kind can be hoped. This distrust, sown for so many years, cannot easily be uprooted. When I entered upon the control of the works hatred and revenge was the watchword which greeted me; it is the same

to-day; and if I place bloodshed between them and me, then all is over. In an open conflict Hartmann might conquer; he might perhaps by bloodshed and violence drive his men to obedience; he still remains to them the Messiah from whom alone they expect their redemption. If I allow a single shot to be fired, if I take up arms even in self-defense, then I am the tyrant who allows murder in cold blood—the oppressor who takes delight in their destruction. The old overseer once said to me—and they were no idle words—'If rebellion once breaks out among us, then God help us!'"

There was no repining, there was not the least trace of despondency in his words; they expressed only the deep resentment of a man who finds himself drawn to the edge of an abyss, to keep away from which he has vainly put forth all his strength. Perhaps the young chief would not thus have spoken to any other, but the head engineer was the only man who of late had been taken into his closest confidence, the only one who, in all the dangers which had menaced him, in all the measures he had undertaken, had stood firmly and unwaveringly at his side. He was also the only one who sometimes heard from the chief other things than the directions and encouraging words which were alone vouchsafed the other officers.

"But a portion of the miners have already attempted to resume work," said the chief engineer.

"And that very reason," replied Arthur, "will compel me to make war upon the others. No rec-

onciliation with Hartmann is to be hoped for. I have once sought it in vain."

"With whom? What have you sought, Herr Berkow?" asked the officer with such an expression of horror that the young chief looked at him in astonishment.

"An understanding with Hartmann. It certainly did not happen officially; that one might have considered cowardice. It was at an accidental meeting between us two alone, where I once again offered him my hand."

"That you could not do! Offer your hand to that man!" interposed the engineer excitedly. "My God! but in truth you as yet know nothing."

"I could not?" repeated Arthur somewhat sharply. "What do you mean by that, sir? You may be assured that I know how to fully maintain my dignity, even on such an occasion as that."

The officer had already recovered his self-control.

"I beg your pardon, Herr Berkow," he said. "My expression was not intended as a criticism upon our chief: it referred only to the son, who certainly has no suspicion of the reports connected with his father's death. We had pledged our word to say nothing of these to you, and we did this with the best intentions. But I now see that we were wrong, that you ought to know. You would have offered your hand to Hartmann; and this, I repeat, should not be."

Arthur looked fixedly at him. His face had all at once become colorless and the lips trembled.

"You speak of Hartmann and of my father's death. Is there any connection between the two?"

"I fear so: we all fear it. Common suspicion attaches to Hartmann, and not alone with us—also among his comrades."

"At that time, in the mines?" broke out Arthur in fearful excitement. "A treacherous attack against a defenseless man? I cannot believe that of Hartmann."

"He hated the dead man," said the chief engineer significantly, "and he never denied this hatred. Herr Berkow might have enraged him by a command, by a word. Whether the rope really broke through mere accident, and he employed the moment of danger to rescue himself and hurl the other back into the abyss, or whether the whole was a deliberate plan—this question truly is shrouded in mystery. But he is not innocent; for that I would vouch."

The young chief showed how this view of the case excited him. He leaned heavily against the table for support.

"The inquest decided that it was an accident," he returned with faltering voice.

"The inquest decided nothing. They assumed it to be an accident and let it pass as such. No one ventured a public accusation. Every proof was wanting, and it would have led to an interminable contest with our miners if we had made use of this suspicion to take from them their leader, who in all probability would have been exculpated. We

knew, Herr Berkow, that as things then were you could not avoid a conflict with this rival; and we would at least spare you the bitterness of knowing with whom you fought. That was the reason of our silence."

Arthur passed his hand over his moist forehead.

"I did not suspect that—not that!" he said. "And even if it is only a suspicion, you are right: I should not offer the man my hand."

"And this man," interposed the officer excitedly, "has, at the head of his comrades, brought all this misfortune upon you and us. This man has incessantly fomented and prolonged the quarrel; and now, when his power is declining, he seeks to make the rupture incurable and reconciliation impossible. Would you spare him now if you could?"

"Him? No! I was already done with him when he so roughly repelled my overtures, and after the scene of to-day I can no longer spare the others; they driv me to extremities. This morning two hundred of the men wished to resume work, and they certainly have the right to demand protection for their work. The mines must be made secure at any price. I cannot accomplish this alone, and——"

"And—we await your commands, Herr Berkow."

There was a momentary pause, but the visible struggle in Arthur's face gradually gave way to an expression of grave determination.

"I will write to M——! The letter shall be sent to-day: it must be!"

"*At last!*" said the chief engineer half-aloud and almost half-reproachfully. "It is high time."

Arthur turned to his writing-table.

"Go now and take care that the director and the other gentlemen remain at the posts which I assigned them when I was upon the works. They must not move until I come myself. This morning it would have been useless to interfere in all that tumult; perhaps it is now possible. In half an hour I will be with you. If, meantime, anything special happens, send me word immediately."

The officer, just about to withdraw, stepped once again to his chief's side.

"I know what this decision costs you, Herr Berkow," he said gravely, "and we none of us take the matter lightly; but one need not always fear the worst. Perhaps it will pass over without bloodshed."

As with a hasty parting saluation the chief engineer left the room, he was much too hurried and had his head too full of other things to remark the woman who at his approach withdrew still further to the protection of the *portière*. Without even a side glance he strode through the adjoining room and closed the door behind him. The husband and wife were alone.

Arthur had only a bitter smile for the last words of his officer.

"It is too late!" said he now to himself in a hollow voice. "They will not yield without bloodshed. I must reap what my father sowed."

He threw himself down upon the lounge and rested his head in his hand. Now, when he no longer had to endure the glances of inquisitive eyes, when he no longer had to play the chief, upon whose decision all the others hung—now the energy vanished from his features, to give place to that expression of deathly weariness which overpowers even the strongest man if for weeks long all his strength of mind and body has been strained and exercised to the utmost limits of possibility.

It was a moment of deep, utter despondency, such as well might approach a man who must ever, and ever in vain, contend against the curse of a past in which he is guilty of nothing save an indifferent alienation from its interests, and whose momentous heirship, with all its oppressive burdens, has fallen upon him alone. The bitter accusations against his father which often came involuntarily from his lips were stricken dumb at the moment he heard those dreadful hints as to his father's death.

And still it was the father's fault alone that after this desperate struggle the son was now confronted by this dire necessity, that with ruin before his eyes, forsaken by his wife, deserted by all the world, he grasped at the last means of saving himself and what he still called his from a hatred which, for long years sown and fostered by another hand, had left him to reap its whole terrible harvest.

Arthur, as if in deathly weariness, closed his eyes and leaned his head upon the arm of the lounge: he could endure no more.

Eugenie quietly left her corner and stood upon the threshold. The dangers she had just passed were forgotten—forgotten the accusation of the officer which had just thrilled her with such shuddering horror; forgotten, also, him whose daughter she was and all that dignity due to her ancient and noble race.

Now as she approached her husband she thought of him alone. The thick veil which had so long lain between them should be rent at last. All must and should be explained. At the very idea of divorce she trembled, as if with that decree her death-sentence would be spoken.

If she deceived herself, if she was not received as she wished and ought to be received after this sacrifice which she had extorted from her pride—with stormy violence the blood rushed to the heart of this young wife and this heart beat in nameless anguish. Upon the next minute hung all for her.

"Arthur!" said she softly.

Arthur started up as if a spirit-voice had touched his ear and glanced around him. There, upon the threshold where she had bidden him adieu forever, stood his wife; and at the moment he recognized her sense and reflection vanished. He made a gesture to rush toward her, and the outcry of happiness which burst from his lips, the uplighting of his eyes, betrayed all which by a self-mastery of long months he had until this hour concealed.

"Eugenie!"

The young woman breathed lightly, as if a moun-

tain's weight had fallen from her breast. The glance, the tone with which he called her name, gave her at last the certainty so long despaired of; and if in the midst of his violent excitement he, too, restrained himself—if, as if for protection against his own self, he strove again to put on the old mask and to veil the treacherous glances—it was too late: she had seen too much.

"Whence come you here," he asked at last, with difficulty controlling his emotion, "so sudden, so unexpected? And how did you reach the house? The works are all in an uproar: you could not possibly have passed them."

Eugenie slowly approached him.

"I came only a few minutes ago," she said. "I certainly had to win my way by force: do not now ask me how, it is enough that I won it. I wanted to come to you before danger reached you."

Arthur made an effort to turn away.

"What does this mean, Eugenie? What would you have with this tone? Curt must have alarmed you with his reports in spite of my request, in spite of my express forbiddance. I wish for no sacrifices from duty and magnanimity. You know it."

"Yes, I know it," returned the young wife decidedly. "With these words you have once already thrust me from you. You could not forgive me for having once done you wrong, and in revenge for that you had almost sacrificed yourself and me. Arthur, who was the more revengeful, the harder—of us two?"

'It was not revenge," said he gently. "I gave you freedom · you had yourself wished it."

Eugenie now stood close before him. The word which once for no price would have found its way through her lips now became easy, since she knew herself beloved. She lifted her dark, tear-moist eyes imploringly up to him.

"And it I now tell my husband that I will not have this freedom without him, that I have come back · to share all with him, whatever may happen, that I—have learned to love him—will he then for the second time bid me go?"

She received no answer, at least none in words; but she was already clasped in his arms: and in these arms, which so passionately and firmly inclosed her as if they would never let the treasure won at last go from them, under these passionate caresses Eugenie felt how deeply her loss must have wounded him and what her return in such a moment must be to him.

She saw the uplighting of those great brown eyes in a luster such as, in spite of all those other lightning-like gleams, she had never yet seen in them. The banished, sunken world had mounted up from its abyss to the clearest sunlight, and the young wife must indeed have had a suspicion of all the treasures which it had in store for her; for with an expression of the most entire confidence she laid her head upon her husband's breast as, bending down to her, he said softly:

"My wife! My all!"

Through the open window, as a blessing and a greeting, swayed the voices of the green wooded hills. These voices must have blended their whispers with this newly found happiness, for they had helped bring it about. They had long known they had helped to bring it about. For those solitary fir-crowned hill-tops had long known these two as they did not know themselves; when both stood arrayed in bitter scorn and hostility and spoke that word of separation—spoke it just there when each heart had found in the other its destiny.

But they are of no avail, this scorn and contention of the children of men, if with their loves and longings they are betrayed within the spell the spirit of the mountain throws around his kingdom in the swaying mists of the first spring hours. And what there unites is united for all eternity!

CHAPTER XVIII.

The day which for the Berkow colony had begun so tempestuously ended far more calmly than could have been expected from the scenes of the morning. One unacquainted with the circumstances would perhaps have taken the tranquillity which toward evening lay over the works for the deepest repose; and still it was only the lull of the storm which restrains itself for a moment, only to break loose again with renewed fury.

In the overseer's dwelling also reigned that dull, oppressive stillness which concealed so much calamity in its bosom. The overseer sat silent in his arm-chair by the stove; Martha, busied in her household affairs, went to and fro, and every now and then threw a glance upon Ulrich, who with folded arms paced silently up and down the little room. No one spoke to him; he spoke to none. The former confidences which from the ungovernable character of the young master-miner had often enough led to violent scenes and explosions, but just as often had ended in reconciliation, had long since ceased. Ulrich now ruled within the house absolutely as outside of it among his comrades: even his father no longer ventured to oppose his plans and undertak-

ings; but here, as there, fear was the impelling force; love and confidence were at an end.

The silence had already lasted for some time, and might have endured still longer if Lorenz had not entered. Martha, who saw him from the window, met him at the door. The relations between this betrothed couple were singularly cold. This had been a serious, eventful day, and the young girl's greeting might have been warmer, ought perhaps to have been warmer, on that very account. The young miner seemed to feel this, for his face assumed an almost offended expression and he paused in the midst of his salutation; but Martha did not remark either, and with a hasty movement he turned to Ulrich.

"*Well?*" asked Ulrich, pausing in his walk.

Lorenz shrugged his shoulders.

"It is as I have before told you. To-morrow four hundred will declare themselves ready to go to work, and there are just as many wavering and hesitating ones. You can scarce count upon half."

Ulrich did not fly into a rage, as usually upon such occasions. The wild passion which he had this morning shown when he had learned of a much smaller defection among his comrades strangely contrasted with the almost unnatural repose of his manner as he replied:

"Upon scarce half? And how long will they hold out?"

Lorenz evaded a direct answer.

"It is entirely the younger miners. They have

stood by you from the first and will still remain with you, even if there should be another conflict at the mines to-morrow. Ulrich, will you really push matters so far?"

"He will push them to such a length," said the overseer, rising, "that the men will all fall away from him, one after the other, until at last he remains quite alone. I have told you, Ulrich, you could not succeed with your senseless demands and your senseless hatred, which might have been in place with the father, but which the son certainly has not deserved. What he offered you was enough, that I tell you—I, who have worked so long in the mines and know how to sympathize with my comrades. Most miners would gladly have taken what has been offered to ours, but they have been so much threatened and have become so intimidated that no one longer ventures to lift a hand, because Ulrich has put it into their heads to demand impossibilities. Now for weeks long this has been going on; and yet all this misery, anxiety, and need has been in vain. There must at last come a day when wife and children, with their hunger, will rise above all else. And that day has now come. You have brought all this upon us, Ulrich—you alone; now make an end of it."

The old man had risen and now gazed almost threateningly at his son, but Ulrich, with sullen composure, endured this silent reproach, which at another time might have called forth all his rage.

"I must not quarrel with you, father," he re-

turned coldly: "that I have long known. You are content if you can eat your hard bread in peace, and all which lies beyond that you call folly and wickedness. I have ventured all. I thought I could carry this through, and I should have done it if young Berkow had not all at once risen up and showed us a brow of iron. If it now fails—well, I am still sure of half my comrades, as Carl says; and with these I will show him what conquering us means He shall pay dearly enough for the victory."

The overseer looked up to Lorenz, who stood there with bowed head, without taking part in the conversation; then he turned to his son.

"First see if the half will remain true to you when the chief again steps between you as he did to-day noon. This has cost you the other half, Ulrich. Do you think it has not had its effect—the manner in which he has borne himself from the very day you began to threaten him? Do you think they do not all feel that he is a match for you and them, and that he alone must of necessity control them when you once cease to be their master? This morning some of them for the first time went back to their work: they would have done so three weeks ago if they had dared. Now that the beginning is made, there will be no more pause."

"You may be right, father," said Ulrich sullenly: "there will be no more pause. I have built upon them as upon the rock, and they have proved

wretched sand, which melts away beneath my hands. Berkow has learned how to cajole these cowards: with his eloquence, with his accursed manner, to step among them as if there was never a stone which might be hurled against his forehead, never a mallet which in extremities might hit the high-born chief; and therefore no one ventures to attack him. I know why to-day he all at once carried his head so high—why he rushed into the midst of the tumult with an air as if victory and happiness could no longer fail him; and I also know that both have now come back to him—I myself this morning conducted them to his arms."

The last words were lost by the violent closing of the door which he had meantime opened. No one understood them. Ulrich stepped out into the open air and threw himself down upon the bench. It was a weird, unnatural repose which had fallen over him to-day. It seemed almost painful in a man so accustomed to give loose rein to his wild passion. Whether the desertion of his comrades had so affected him or whether it was something far different which since this morning had come over him, we cannot say: the proud certainty of victory which he had as yet shown at every hour appeared now weakened, almost destroyed.

Over past the little garden flowed the wide stream which further on drove the wheels of the works now standing still. It was a wild, treacherous stream, this brook; it had nothing of the gentle

murmurs, the silver-clear glances of its comrades up in the mountains; and still it came forth from the depths of those mountains, just there where the mines lay. How often had it sought to draw innocent, playing children into its torrent, and at least to frighten and torment where it could not wound and kill; to revenge itself because man had made it a servant to execute his will. With a threatening murmur the mad, restless waters had dashed on in the last evening twilight, and still more ominous now rang out their voice. They hissed mockingly and maliciously, as if down in their depths they had learned of the earth-demons those perfidious wiles with which they lure to death the men who would fain wrest from them their secrets; as if they, too, would demand as their sacrifice young, glowing, hopeful lives, and bury them in the eternal night of their rayless caves. It was nothing good which rang out of it—this rushing and roaring of the waters, and it was in no good hour that this weird murmur fell upon the young miner's ear. Immovable he stared down into those depths as if a mysterious voice were calling to him.

He must have sat there for a long time, when he heard a step approaching, and immediately after Martha stood before him.

"What do you wish?" asked Ulrich, without turning his glance from the stream.

"I wished to see where you were, Ulrich."

There seemed to be a restrained anguish in the girl's voice.

"Where I was? Your betrothed husband is in the house; for him you should care. Leave me where I am."

"Carl has gone already," said Martha quickly, "and he best knows that what I say to you need not concern him."

Ulrich turned and looked at her. It seemed as if he would break loose from the thoughts the rushing of the waters awoke in him.

"Listen, Martha," he said: "no one else would bear from you what Carl bears. I cannot allow you to meet me in this manner. You should not have said yes if you did not love him."

With a gesture almost of scorn the young girl turned away.

"He knows that I do not love him. I told him so when I gave him my promise. He understands all this. I cannot change, at least not now. Perhaps after marriage I shall learn to love him."

"*Perhaps!*" said Ulrich, in a tone too deep and cutting to refer merely to these words. "So many others learn this after marriage, and why not you?"

Again he gazed down into the dark, raging waters as if he could not break loose from its spell. That on-rushing tide, in its wild, unearthly murmurs, seemed to whisper very evil thoughts to him.

Martha stood some few steps from him, for she was not quite free from the fear which since that accident in the mines Ulrich had inspired in all. For weeks she had avoided every association, every

solitary interview with Ulrich; but to-day the old love had awakened mightily within her soul and had driven her almost forcibly to him. This strange calm did not deceive her: she suspected what lay behind it.

"You cannot get over the desertion of your comrades?" asked she gently. "Half of them yet remain true to you, and Carl will stand by you to the last minute."

Ulrich smiled disdainfully.

"To-day it is half, to-morrow it will be a quarter, and day after to-morrow—let it rest, Martha. As for Lorenz, he has from the first been with me only with half a heart. He has stood by me, and not by the revolt, because I was his friend; but there will soon be an end of friendship. Besides, his heart is so much engrossed in you that he cannot now honorably love me."

"Ulrich!" said the young girl with a passionate gesture.

"Well, that can no longer wound you. You would not consent when I begged you to be my wife. If you had, it would have been far better."

"It would not have been better," said Martha decidedly. "I am not made to endure what Carl so patiently endures day after day; and as it is between him and me, it would have been between us two, only it would have been I who must endure. I had no share in your heart; your love was wholly another's."

There lay a bitter reproach in the words, but

even this did not enrage Ulrich to-day. He had risen and was looking over to the darkening park as if he sought some object between the trees.

"You think I could have found this love nearer and better if I had only sought it; and there you are right. But one does not seek this, Martha: it suddenly seizes one and does not release him while a breath remains in his breast. I have learned this. I have done you wrong, girl—how great wrong I now know for the first time; but believe me there is no blessing in such a love as mine; it often oppresses one more heavily than the bitterest hatred."

It sounded strangely, this half-entreaty for forgiveness in the mouth of Ulrich Hartmann, who usually asked little whether he had done one wrong or no; and there was something else in the words which lay infinitely far from his character—a dumb resignation, a sorrow which no longer had anything wild or passionate, but which on that account was so much the more touching. Martha forgot timidity and fear; she stepped close to his side.

"What is the matter with you, Ulrich? You are so strange to-day, as I have never before seen you. What is wanting to you?"

He stroked the blond hair from his temples and leaned for support against the wooden fence.

"I do not know. An undefined something has oppressed me the whole day long—a something from which I cannot free myself and which robs me of all my strength. I certainly shall need all this strength to-morrow; but whenever I would

think of it everything grows black and obscure, as if nothing lay beyond this to-morrow, as if with it all was at an end—all!" With a touch of his old obstinacy Ulrich started up. "Idiotic thoughts! I believe the water down there has done all this to me with its accursed roaring. And I have just now time to listen. Farewell."

He was about to go, but the girl anxiously held him back.

"Where will you go? To your comrades?"

"No. I must take one more walk alone. Farewell."

"Ulrich, stay, I implore you!"

The young miner's short-lived weakness was already over. He broke impatiently away.

"Let me go! I have no time to talk with you—some other day!"

He burst open the garden gate and shortly after vanished in the twilight of the way leading to the park.

Martha stood there with folded hands and gazed after him. Mortification and bitter sorrow struggled in her features, but grief still held the mastery. "There is no blessing in such love!" The words yet again echoed in her heart; she also felt that there was no blessing in hers.

Meantime Eugenie Berkow found herself alone in her husband's cabinet. There remained to this husband and wife but little time to give themselves up to love and to love's happiness. Twice already had Arthur been forced to leave her side: to-day

noon, when he had thrown himself into the midst of the revolt and for the moment had overpowered it; and now again, when a conference with his officers summoned him away. But in spite of her uneasiness about him, in spite of her anxiety in regard to the present, still so dark and threatening, the young wife's face glowed with the reflection of a deep inward happiness which, won after so long a conflict, no longer trembled before any outward storm. She was with her husband, at his side, in his protection; and Arthur seemed only too well to understand how to make his wife forget all else but him.

A door was opened and steps were heard in the adjoining room. Eugenie rose hastily to greet the new-comer, whom she naturally supposed to be her husband, but her first astonishment at sight of the strange form yielded to terror as in the man who entered she recognized Ulrich Hartmann.

He also paused in astonishment as he became aware of her presence.

"Is it you, my lady? I seek Herr Berkow."

'He is not here. I was just now expecting him," replied Eugenie quickly, but with trembling voice.

She knew what a dangerous man this was for Arthur—what *r le* he played here upon the works; still she had not hesitated to confide herself to his protection when this morning no other choice had remained to her; but between this morning and evening lay those hours in which she had heard the accusations the chief engineer had made against

him. It was only a suspicion, but even the suspicion of the treacherous, under-handed murder of a defenseless man is something terrible. The very thought of it had filled this young woman with horror. She had confided herself to the open, reckless enemy of her husband, but she drew back shuddering from the hand which perhaps was red with the blood of Arthur's father.

Ulrich remarked this movement only too well. He remained standing upon the threshold, but there was an unmistakable irony in his voice as he said:

"I have perhaps frightened you with my entrance? It was not my fault that I did not have myself announced. Your ladyship is badly served. I found none of your lackeys either on the stairs or in the corridors. I might perhaps have thrust them aside had they refused me entrance, but their outcry at this would have been a sort of announcement."

Eugenie knew that he could have entered unhindered. Franz and Anton, at Arthur's express command, were in the anteroom of her own apartments. Now, when all minds were excited, when all the bands of order were loosened, he did not know but the lawlessness of some might lead to an attack, or at least an intrusion into the house. Unrest and anxiety had driven the young wife over to her husband's chamber, which lay in the other wing, and from whose windows she could see him coming. Here, in truth, the entrance was unguarded; and she was entirely alone in these rooms.

"What do you wish here, Hartmann?" she asked, summoning all her courage. "I did not suppose that after all which has happened you would seek to enter our house, and even intrude yourself into the apartment of your chief. You must know that he no longer can receive you."

"It is for that very reason I seek him to speak a few words with him. I expected to find him alone. It was not you I sought, your ladyship."

At the last words he had stepped nearer. Eugenie involuntarily drew back to the furthest part of the room. He laughed bitterly.

"Can a few hours have made such a change? This morning you demanded my protection and leaned upon my arm as I conducted you through the tumult: now you flee from me as if near me you were not sure of your life. Herr Berkow has well employed the time to represent me to you as a robber and a murderer—has he not?"

The young woman's delicate brows contracted as, subduing her fear, she sternly replied:

"Leave me! My husband is not here! You see this; and even if he were to come now I should hardly like to leave you alone with him."

"Why not?" asked Ulrich slowly, but with a lowering glance. "Why not?" repeated he more passionately, as she was silent.

Eugenie's fearless character had often betrayed her into inconsiderate expressions, and even now she did not think of the possible consequences of her words as, firmly returning his glance, she was hurried on to give this dangerous answer:

"Because your nearness has already proved fatal to a Berkow."

Hartmann shuddered and turned pale. For a moment it seemed as if he would break forth into all his old savagery, but it did not happen. The dumb repose remained upon his features, and his voice retained the masked, hollow tone it had had during the whole interview.

"Ah, that was it?" said he half-aloud. "Truly, I might have thought that this at last had found its way to you."

The young woman looked with surprise upon this calmness, which she had not expected here, and which, in spite of all, seemed unnatural to her; but even this incited her to a still greater venture. This morning he had shown her how unlimited was her power, and for Arthur's sake she wished to be certain as to who stood opposed to him in this conflict. She had a presentiment that the truth, even if concealed from all the world besides, would not be denied her.

"You must know what I mean?" she began anew. "You understand my hint? Hartmann, can you pronounce the reports false which since that unhappy hour have been connected with your name?"

He crossed his arms and gazed morosely at the floor.

"And even if I did, would you believe me?"

Eugenie was silent.

"Would you believe me?" he asked yet again, but with a tone as if life and death for him hung upon her answer.

She let her glance sweep over his face, which betrayed the same agonized suspense as his voice. It was still deathly pale, this face, but it was now again fully turned toward her.

"I hold you capable of crime when your passionate nature is aroused, but not of falsehood."

Ulrich's powerful breast rose and fell under its deep pulsations, and as if to relieve her fears he stepped back.

"As it is you who ask, my lady, I will answer."

The young woman trembled and leaned for support on the arm of the divan. She felt the danger of such an interview with such a man, but still she put the momentous question.

"They declare to my husband that it was more than a mere accident which caused the rope to break on that unlucky day. What was it, Hartmann?"

"It was accident, or rather it was something better, if you will force me to say it—it was retribution. Our chief had caused a change to be made in the elevator, which, like all he did, was for necessity, not for security. What mattered it if a few hundreds of miners, who must every day go up and down this elevator, were every day exposed to danger? Double and treble what it was able to bear was demanded of the senseless thing, and it at last had its revenge, but not upon the workmen—it was upon the chief himself. It was not a human hand, your ladyship, which made the rope break just at that moment when it must bear its weight; and it was mine least of all. I saw the danger coming:

we were already at the last platform; I made a spring upward, and——"

"Pushed him back?" interrupted Eugenie breathlessly as he paused.

"No! I only let him fall. I could have rescued him if I had wished. A half-minute was time enough for that. In truth, it might have cost my own life; he might have pulled me down with him if I had come to his help: but for every one of my comrades, for every one of the officers, I would have risked this; for that man I would not. At that moment all he had done to us shot through my brain. I thought that the fate to which, for the sake of sparing his money, he every day exposed us was only coming to him, and I would not interfere with the just retribution of Heaven. In spite of his outcries I did not lift my hand, and a minute after it was too late. The elevator fell and he with it."

Hartmann was silent. Eugenie in mingled horror and sympathy gazed up at him. She knew only too well that his accusations against the dead were just, and she felt that even if she herself at such an hour might have put forth her hand to rescue the hated Berkow, the man before her had been tried past forgiveness or forgetfulness. He had but let his enemy perish before his eyes when perhaps at the peril of his own life he might have rescued him.

"Have you told me the whole truth, Hartmann?" she asked. "Upon your word and honor?"

"Upon my word and my honor, your ladyship!"

His eyes sullenly yet firmly met hers. The young woman no longer doubted as she reproachfully asked:

"And why did you not solve this mystery? Why did you not speak to others as you have to me?"

An expression of bitter disdain passed over his face.

"Because no one would have believed me—not a single one, not even my father. He is quite right. I have been wild and uncontrollable beyond all measure my whole life long. I have thrown down all which stood in my way and never troubled myself as to what others said of me; that I must now confess. They all know that I hated the dead man, and as the accident happened when I was near I knew they would lay it to me. There was no doubt of that. My own father said it to my face; and as I could not say 'Yes' when he asked me if I was entirely innocent of Berkow's death—I had only to stretch forth my arm to rescue him and I did not do it—as I could not say 'Yes,' he would not hear another word from me. He would not have believed me even upon my oath. I have now and then sought to convince my comrades of my innocence, and although they did not contradict me, I saw in their faces that they considered me a liar. I would not sue for their confidence, so I let things go as they would. I retained their friendship and comeradeship all the same. If I had been arrested by process of law I should certainly have spoken, but it would still have been questionable whether any one believed me."

Eugenie shook her head.

"You should have forced them to believe you, Hartmann, and they would have done it if you had only seriously demanded it, but your pride and obstinacy would not suffer this. You met the suspicion with disdain, and that very thing strengthened it. Now you are suspected throughout the works, by the officers, by my husband——"

"What do I care for Herr Berkow?" he interposed roughly. "What for all the rest? Whether they condemn me or not, it is all the same to me. But I could not bear, my lady, to have you turn from me in fear and detestation; from you alone I could not bear it; and you believe me now. I see it in your eyes. I am perfectly indifferent to the rest."

"I believe you," said Eugenie gravely, "and I will see that my husband exculpates you from the worst suspicion at least. We must not judge you for not saving life where you might have saved it; for that you are answerable to your own conscience. But Arthur shall no longer believe that the murderer of his father stands opposed to him. It is certainly too late for reconciliation. You have gone too far. For the first time, two hours ago I learned all that had happened, all that perhaps would happen if the attack upon the mines is renewed tomorrow. Hartmann"—the young woman thoughtlessly approached him and imploringly laid her hand upon his arm—"Hartmann, we stand upon the brink of a fearful catastrophe. You have

forced my husband to protect himself and his from danger, and he has concluded so to do. To-morrow morning blood will flow, must flow; reflect upon whom the responsibility will fall."

Her nearness, her hand upon his arm, did not fail of their effect upon Ulrich, but this effect was no salutary one. His voice lost more and more its calm, indifferent tone as he answered:

"Upon me, do you think? Have a care, my lady! It might also fall upon you if it harmed the one you love. Herr Berkow certainly will not remain here in the house if there is fighting outside; that I know, and I also know whom I shall first seek when the conflict breaks out."

Eugenie had tremblingly withdrawn her hand and retreated from him. She heard this tone, and at the same time saw a glance which warned her. He was always the uncontrollable tiger who one moment listened to her voice, perhaps the next to rise against her in the whole terrible might of his rage; and the moment seemed to have come; that glance threatened even her.

"Hartmann, you speak with the wife of your chief!" she cried with an unavailing effort to recover her self-possession. "If you hate him——"

"The chief?" interrupted he with wild irony. "It matters not with whom I at the head of my comrades have to deal. It is Arthur Berkow I hate, because you are his wife, because you love him, and I—I love you, Eugenie, more than all else in the wide world! Do not be so horrified at this; you

must have known it long ago; I could not help it from the first moment I saw you. I have tried by force to crush and annihilate this love, but I could not. I cannot to-day, even though I again feel more than ever the old truth that only equal must unite with equal, and that for the like of us there can remain nothing but an aristocratic shrug of the shoulder, even though we have periled life for her we love. But if a life is again in peril, I am not the one so senselessly to expose my own as I did under the hoofs of your horses when you came here on your wedding-journey; for that, another life must be risked than mine. I have already hated a Berkow to the death. I then believed I could hate no man on earth so bitterly: now I know better. I have not yet been guilty of murder, but there is one I could murder, one only! I did not kill the father, but if I should ever be thus alone with the son, then it would be he or I—or both!"

It was terrible, this moment, when the passion of this man, mounting almost to madness, burst its barriers—an impetuous, devastating torrent which nothing could any longer dam or restrain. Eugenie saw that here any word, any outcry, would be too late, and felt that her power was at an end. She could not fly: he stood in the way to the door; but she hastened to the bell-pull and rang with all her might. The servants were in the other wing, but still it might be possible for the sound to reach them.

Hartmann had followed her. He sought to

snatch her hand from the bell-wire, but at the same moment he was seized by an arm to which indignation now lent strength to hurl aside this giant figure as if it had been that of a child. It was Arthur who stood between them, and with an outcry of joy, but also of mortal terror, Eugenie fled to her husband. She knew what must now come.

Ulrich rushed forward without a word, but with features so distorted by rage as to be past recognition. That which now flamed up in his eyes as they met his rival betokened inevitable destruction; but Arthur, with ready presence of mind, had taken down a pistol which hung over his writing-desk, and throwing his left arm around his wife, with the right he pointed the deadly weapon toward his rival.

"Back, Hartmann! Do no again venture to approach! One more step toward my wife, a single one, and you lie upon the floor!"

The threatened man paused. In spite of the fury with which he was about to rush forward, he saw that the muzzle of the weapon pointed directly at him and that the hand which held it did not tremble. If he took another step forward he would be shot and his rival remain conqueror. He clinched his unarmed right hand.

"I have no pistol," said he, gnashing his teeth. "If I had, then we should stand equal against equal, Herr Chief; but certainly we never have stood thus. You have better prepared yourself than I. I have only my fist to place against your ball, and there is no doubt which would do the quickest work."

Arthur did not take his eyes from him.

"It is your doing, Hartmann," he said, "that we must now always have loaded weapons in our hands. I will at least protect my house and my wife against you, even if it costs your life. Back, I tell you once again!"

There was once more that same steady, unflinching glance from both men as at their first interview, when each appeared to measure the other's strength; and now as then the young chief remained conqueror, though things had now gone so far that he needed other weapons than his eyes alone. He stood there immovable as yet, his finger upon the lock of the pistol, and with the same glance as at that former meeting he followed his rival until he reached the door.

"I have never yet placed much value upon my life," said Ulrich defiantly: "I think you both must have had proof of this; but I will not allow myself to be shot down upon your threshold. I have still to reckon with you, sir. Do not tremble so, my lady! You are in his arms and he is safe—*now* he is safe, but we are not yet at an end. And even if you both stood there as if nothing could ever sunder you, as if you were linked one to the other for all eternity, still some time my hour would come; and then, then you would think of me!"

He went. The heavy step echoed first in the adjoining room, then in the antechamber; at last it died away outside. The young wife nestled more

closely in her husband's arms. She had now proved in what manner they knew how to guard her.

"You came at the right time, Arthur," she said, still trembling with horror at the scene just past. "I had left my room in spite of your warning: it was an imprudence, I know; but I wanted to await you here, and I believed I should at least be safe anywhere in the house."

Arthur let the weapon fall and drew her closer to him.

"But you were not, you have just learned," he said. "What did Hartmann wish here in my cabinet?"

"I do not know. He sought you, but evidently with no good intention."

"I am prepared for all that may happen from this side," Arthur returned calmly as he laid the pistol on the writing-desk. "You see I was ready for this attack; but I fear it is only a prelude to to-morrow, when the real drama begins. Do you tremble before it, Eugenie? The help I have summoned may arrive toward evening, but we shall have to hold out all day against the rioters."

"At your side I tremble at nothing more. But, Arthur"—here her voice took an expression of anguished entreaty—"do not again go out alone into the midst of the uproar as you did to-day noon. He is there and he has sworn your death."

Arthur gently lifted his young wife's head and gazed deep and steadily into her eyes.

"Life and death are not in Hartmann's hands,"

he said: "over them there is Another, who must decide. Be calm, Eugenie! I will do my duty, but I shall do it otherwise than in all these days before, for I now know that my wife is anxious about me. That I shall not easily forget."

Outside upon the terrace stood Ulrich Hartmann. The twilight had deepened. One could no longer decide as to the expression of his face as he glanced in the windows of the house he had just left, but his voice betrayed it. Half-aloud, as an oath, he repeated the threat he had before hurled at Arthur Berkow:

"He or I, or, if it must be—both of us!"

CHAPTER XIX.

It had come—the morning of that momentous day to which Arthur Berkow and all connected with his interests had looked forward with such anxious foreboding. And their most serious apprehensions seemed about to be realized.

At an early hour all the officers assembled at the house of their chief. They might have come to take counsel or fear might have driven them there. It seemed as if the latter were the impelling motive, for the faces of the gentlemen were pale and agitated and their manner betrayed great anxiety.

"I insist that it was a mistake to imprison the three miners," declared Herr Schäffer to the director. "We might have ventured this if military assistance had been at hand, but we never should have done so on our own responsibility. Now they will storm the house to free the prisoners, and we shall have to give them up."

"Begging your pardon, that we shall not do!" exclaimed the chief engineer, who, as usual, placed himself in direct opposition to his colleague. "We will endure the storm, and, if necessary, defend ourselves here in the house. Herr Berkow has fully decided to do this."

"Well, you certainly must best know his decisions. You are his sole adviser," returned the director, somewhat piqued.

He certainly could not boast of a similar intimacy with the young chief, although his place perhaps would sooner have entitled him to it.

"Herr Berkow usually forms his conclusions without help from others," replied the chief engineer dryly; "but in this case I, as usual, fully agree with him. It would have been against law and conscience, it would have been pitiable baseness to let these three rascals go free. It was their fixed intention to destroy our machines."

"At Hartmann's command," interposed Schäffer.

"But they lent themselves to its execution. The master did right to hinder this knavish trick, and I would like to see the man who in such a case would have let these fellows go unpunished. He had them shut up, and he was right. Hartmann certainly was not at hand: he was at the mines, where the excitement was already at its height, and where, after all, he could not hinder the workmen going down, because his own father withstood him."

"Yes, it was a lucky thing that the overseer came to our help," said the director. "He must have seen that no other means was left him to prevent extreme measures when he this morning, of his own free will, offered to lead the workmen to the mines, although that is not his office. He knew that, come what would, his son would not attack him,

and none of the others would raise a hand against their comrades when they saw the leader quail. We must thank the old man solely that the descent into the mines has been really accomplished."

"Yes, I admit that the descent has been accomplished. More than half the miners remained neutral, and if they had not been enraged by the arrest of their comrades the whole thing would have passed over in peace and tranquillity."

"In peace and tranquillity while Hartmann commands!" laughed the chief engineer bitterly: "you most woefully deceive yourselves. He seeks an excuse for attack, no matter what, and in an emergency would have made it without any excuse. The events of this morning must have showed him that his power is fast declining—that perhaps he can control his men only to-day, and therefore he dares all. The fellow knows that he is lost and recklessly carries with him into ruin all who follow him from fear or habit. He has nothing more for which to care and he will spare us least of all."

They were interrupted by Herr Wilberg, who with a blanched face came from the window where he had posted himself for the last ten minutes.

"The tumult increases," he said timidly. "There is no doubt that they intend an attack upon the house if Herr Berkow does not yield. The park fence is already down, the grounds are stamped and trodden over. Ah, the magnificent roses upon the terraces!"

"Keep away from us with your sentimentality!"

spoke up the chief engineer, while the director and Schäffer hastened to the window. "Now, when the rebels are storming the house, you think of the down-trodden rose-bushes. Would you not like to withdraw and put this lament over the roses into verse? I should think it would be just the right subject for a poet."

"I have for some time had the misfortune of exciting the displeasure of the Herr Engineer with all I say and do," returned Herr Wilberg, offended, but still with an air of secret self-satisfaction, which seemed to rise above the malice of his superior.

"Because you neither say nor do anything sensible," growled the engineer, turning his back to Herr Wilberg and joining his colleagues, who from the window were watching the ever-increasing tumult.

"This will become serious," said the director restlessly. "They are threatening the entrance. We must inform the chief."

"Leave him in peace for the moment at least," interposed the chief engineer. "I thought he had remained so persistently at his post since dawn we might now allow him five minutes with his wife. The necessary measures have all been arranged, and wherever danger is there he will be. That you must know."

The officer was right. Since the early morning hours Arthur had been uninterruptedly engaged in giving commands, making arrangements and personal inspections, and had now for a few minutes

withdrawn with his wife into an adjoining room. He must have informed her of the exact state of affairs, for the young wife's arms, in agonized excitement, were flung around his neck.

"You must not go out, Arthur," she said: "it is a rash, a desperate venture. What can you do alone against this raging multitude? Yesterday they were quarreling among themselves when you stepped between: to-day they will all turn against you. You will atone for this daring. I cannot let you go."

Arthur gently but decidedly released himself from her arms.

"I must, Eugenie," he said. "It is the only possibility of quelling the storm, and it is not the first time I have been forced to encounter such scenes. What did you do yesterday on your arrival?"

"I wanted to come to you," said Eugenie, in a tone as if this ought to justify every venture. "But you will break away from me to deliver yourself up to the blind fury of this Hartmann. Think of the scene of yesterday evening—of his threats! If you must go out, if no choice is left you, then let me at least go with you. I am not timid; I tremble at danger only when I know you are exposed to it alone."

He bent gravely but lovingly down to her.

"I know that you have courage, my Eugenie, but I should be a coward in the midst of that mob, when I knew that a stone from their midst might

also hit you. I want my full courage to-day, and I should not have it if I saw you near me threatened and had not the power to protect you. I know why you wish to accompany me: you believe me secure from one arm so long as you stand at my side. Do not deceive yourself. Since yesterday evening that is past; since then you have a share in the hatred with which he follows me; and even if this were not so"—here his voice lost its gentle, pleading tone and his brow contracted—"I will not owe my security to a sentiment which is an insult to you as well as to me, and which alone demands the removal of this man, even if his other proceedings did not."

The young wife must have felt the truth of these words. She bowed her head in silent resignation. Arthur continued:

"The tumult is breaking out anew. I must go. Our meetings to-day must be limited to minutes, and they will be full enough of anguish, my poor wife. You could not have come back at a worse time."

"Would you rather endure the storm alone without me?" asked Eugenie softly.

A glow of passionate tenderness illuminated the young man's clouded features.

"Without you? I have hitherto endured like the soldier upon a forsaken post. Since yesterday I have learned that a struggle may be worth something when one has a life's happiness and a future to win through it. You have brought both back to

me, and if from all sides the tempest breaks forth more fiercely upon us, I again believe in victory, since I again have you."

The debate among the officers, growing ever more excited, was silenced as Berkow entered with his wife, but the emotion visible on all sides was more than mere respect for the entrance of the chief. All the grave, anxious, apprehensive glances were fixed upon his face, as if from it they would read hope or fear. All pressed around him as around a central prop, against which they sought a support and stay; all breathed more freely at his entrance, as if with it alone a part of the danger were removed. This emotion, involuntary as it was, sufficed to show Eugenie what a position her husband had won among those around him, and his manner as he stepped among them showed still more that he knew how to retain it. His face, which only a few moments before the young wife had seen so deeply troubled, now, when he met all these anxious faces, betrayed only a calm seriousness, nothing more; and his bearing was so confident that it must have infused courage into even the most timid.

"Well, gentlemen, it looks rather hostile and threatening outside there," he said. "We must prepare ourselves for a sort of siege, perhaps for an attack. Do you not think so?"

"They want the prisoners released," said the director with a glance at Schäffer, as if demanding his support, and Schäffer now interposed;

"Yes, certainly, Herr Berkow, and I fear we shall not be able to maintain ourselves against the uproar. The incarceration of the three miners is for the moment their only ground or excuse for it. If we took this from them——"

"Then they would find others," interrupted Arthur sharply, "and the weakness betrayed by us would give them new courage. We must show neither weakness nor fear, or we shall lose the game at the last moment. I foresaw the consequences when I had the three mischief-makers arrested, but to meet this attack only the most urgent measures will suffice. The prisoners remain in confinement until the soldiers arrive."

The director stepped back and Schäffer shrugged his shoulders. They had now learned to know their young chief well enough to understand that this tone would admit of no contradiction.

"I miss Hartmann among the mob," said Arthur, turning to the chief engineer. "He is usually the leader in all uproar and tumult, but to-day he seems to have only urged the men on to the attack and then to have left them alone. He is nowhere visible."

"And I, too, have missed him for a quarter of an hour," returned the engineer thoughtfully. "I hope he is not stirring up new mischief somewhere else. You commanded the guards stationed at the machine-houses to be withdrawn, Herr Berkow?"

"Certainly. We want the few men at our disposal here at the house: and now that entrance has

been forced into the mines, they as well as the machines are quite secure. Nothing can be done there without endangering the workmen below."

"With such a leader would this be a consideration?" asked the officer doubtfully.

Arthur's brow grew dark.

"I might have thought of that! Hartmann is an uncontrolled, savage nature when enraged, but he is not a villain, and what you have hinted at would be villainy. He would have destroyed the machines so as to hinder the descent, and as he could not hinder it, why do you believe that he would so insanely fall upon the machine-houses? It certainly would not be to expose his father and comrades to destruction. He wished to recall his former orders, and when he saw that we were ahead of him he became enraged at the failure of his plans against us. The descent alone has saved us the machines. No one lifts his hand against them while the overseer and the rest are in the mines, but instead they direct the storm against the house. I will go out and make an effort to quell it."

During the last weeks the officers had become accustomed to see their chief enter into scenes like this with the utmost daring and without regard to personal danger, but to-day warnings and entreaties were heard from all sides. Even the chief engineer for this once joined in, while Schäffer, who well knew from what source alone expostulation could avail, turned to Eugenie, who still stood at her husband's side.

"Do not let him go, your ladyship—not to-day. To-day it is more perilous than upon all days before. The miners are terribly excited, and this time Hartmann is playing a desperate game against us. Keep our chief back!"

The young wife became deathly pale at this warning, which only too well confirmed her own fears, but she retained her self-possession; a part of Arthur's calmness seemed to have passed over to her.

"My husband has declared to me that he must make the effort," she returned firmly, "and he shall not say that I with tears and entreaties kept him back from what he deemed his duty. Let him go!"

Arthur clasped her hand still more firmly in his own, but he thanked her only with a glance.

"Now, gentlemen," he said, "take an example from the courage of my wife. She certainly has the most to tremble for. I repeat to you, the attempt must be made. Let the doors be opened."

"We all go with you!" cried the chief engineer. "Fear nothing, my lady. I will not leave your husband's side."

Arthur calmly but firmly declined the proffer.

"I thank you; but you remain here, and the other gentlemen likewise. I go alone. In such a case the solitary man is safest from the mob. The appearance of you all might seem a challenge. Only hold yourselves ready, if things come to the worst, to cover my retreat into the house. Farewell, Eugenie!"

He went, accompanied to the steps by the chief engineer and the other officers. No one made any further effort to hold him back. They all knew that in his appearance among the mob outside lay the only possibility of averting a danger, to withstand which for many hours here within the house seemed difficult, if not impossible.

Eugenie hastened to a window. She did not see that all present in anxious suspense pressed to the other windows; she did not hear the half-audible remarks exchanged between the director and Schäffer, who stood immediately behind her: she saw only the wild, excited multitude, which, head crowding above head, surrounded the house, and with savage yells demanded the release of the prisoners—the multitude which would now hurl itself against her husband alone and the next moment perhaps threaten his life.

The more elegant than strong iron fence of the park had already yielded to the storm: it lay in ruins on the ground. The costly and carefully kept pleasure grounds, trodden down by hundreds of footsteps, presented only a wild chaos of earth, flower-pots, and trampled shrubs. The foremost had already reached the terrace, and from there had forced their way close up to the house; already some fists were armed with stones to hurl against the windows. Shouts, threats, cries of all kinds blended wildly together; the tumult increased from minute to minute, until it mounted to a howl of a moment's duration which had no longer anything human in its sound.

Then all at once there was a deep, breathless calm. The tumult died away suddenly, as if some celestial power had commanded silence. The wildly excited groups paused; the mob swayed back as if it had encountered some sudden resistance; and all eyes, all faces, turned in one direction. The front door was opened and the young chief stepped out upon the terrace.

The silence was of only a few moments' duration; then the momentary surprise yielded to a renewed outbreak of fury more terrible than the first; and now it had a better object. All these furious outcries, all these faces distorted by rage, all these threateningly lifted arms, which just before had menaced the house and its inmates, now turned against a single one; but this one was the chief, the master of the works: and what the father, with his mechanical genius, with his persistent endurance and his tyrannical will, had not been able to establish in many years, the son had enforced in a few weeks—his absolute personal authority. It availed even here, where all the bands of order were loosened. Calmly he let the storm rage around him; the slender form erect, the large eyes steady and clear turned to the throng, every one of which was his superior in strength and from which he had no protection save his authority. There he stood opposed to them, entirely alone and unarmed; but he stood there as if these surging waves of insurrection must break against him.

And in truth they did break. Gradually the up-

roar subsided; it subsided into cries, then murmurs; at last these also died away. And now arose Berkow's voice, at first inaudible amid the excitement and still often interrupted by the tumult which by fits and starts again broke forth, but which, often as it rose, again sank powerless and at last entirely ceased; so that only the voice of the young chief was heard, which, clear, loud, and distinct, rose above all and became intelligible to the most distant.

"God be thanked!" murmured Schäffer as he wiped his forehead with his pocket-handkerchief; "now he has them in rein. The mob foams at the mouth and rears, but it obeys. Only see, your ladyship, how the excitement is subsiding—how all fall back! They are really leaving the terrace! and see there, the stones also are falling to the ground! If Heaven only keeps Hartmann away just now the danger is over."

He did not know with what mental anguish Eugenie was repeating this prayer in her soul. She had been continually seeking that dreaded form amid the mob, and so long as it was not visible she kept up her courage, so long she believed Arthur safe. But now hope and security were at an end.

It might be that the sudden cessation of the uproar he had intentionally aroused called back the missing one, or that a suspicion of what had happened drew him hither at the decisive moment. As if he stepped out of the earth, Ulrich Hartmann suddenly stood at the park gate behind the mob, and a single glance told him how matters were.

CHAPTER XX.

"Cowards you are, all of you!" he cried in a voice of thunder to his comrades as, followed by Lorenz and the master-miner Wilms, he forced his way through the dense mass. "I hardly supposed that you would allow yourselves to fall into his net while we went to ascertain where the prisoners had been taken. We know now. They are there in the lower story of the right tower, close behind the great hall. Break in the plate-glass window, and then we have no need to storm the door."

No one obeyed the command, and yet it did not remain ineffectual. There is nothing more wavering of soul, more will-less, than an excited mob which is wont to allow itself to be controlled by the will of one man. In all this tumult and uproar, just subsided, there had been a lack of purpose, an indecision which would never have gone so far as a direct attack. The eye, the arm of the leader had been wanting; now they were present, and the moment his hand again grasped the reins he gave the mob a decided purpose. They now knew where the prisoners could be found; they knew the way to them; and this awakened anew the danger which had been only partially overcome.

Ulrich at this moment gave himself little concern whether or not his orders were obeyed. He had forced his way to the terrace and now stood close before the young chief, with the whole obstinacy and pride of his uncontrollable nature, with his giant form towering almost a head above all the others He was the born leader of the masses, whose wild energy, whose despotic will impelled them on to a blind obedience, and who, in spite of all that had happened, all that perhaps might happen, still for the moment had unlimited power over them. The whole victory which Arthur had won was imperiled, if not destroyed, by the mere appearance of this man, whose individuality was at least as powerful in its workings as his own.

"Where are our comrades?" asked Hartmann threateningly as he stepped still nearer. "We will have them released this instant. We allow no outrage against any of our men."

"And I allow no destroying of my machines," interrupted Arthur with calm dignity. "I have had the men shut up, although they were only the tool of another hand. Who ordered the attack upon the machines?"

Ulrich's eyes flashed fearfully but triumphantly. He had foreseen this firmness and had built his plans upon it He indeed wanted no excuse for an attack; he would, at any cost, gratify his hatred; but his men, who were already wavering and threatened to desert their colors, needed such excuse. This would goad on anew the faint-hearted ones,

and the rival was brave and proud enough to allow him this.

"I need not bandy words with you!" he cried derisively, "and I certainly need not allow you to listen to me with that arrogant air. Once again I tell you, release those prisoners! The miners demand it, or——"

His glance finished the threat.

"The prisoners remain in confinement," declared Arthur unmoved. "And you, Hartmann, have no longer a right to speak in the name of all the miners: more than half have already deserted you. I have nothing more to say to you."

"But I have to you!" cried Ulrich, beside himself. "To our comrades!" he shouted, turning to the excited mob. "Strike down all that opposes you! Forward!"

He was about to fall upon Berkow first of all and thereby give the signal for attack, but before this could happen, before it was decided whether the mob would yield or deny him obedience, there was heard a strange sound, which made all tremble and caused even the wild leader to pause in horror, while he like the others listened spell-bound and in breathless silence It was a sound like distant, hollow thunder, which seemed to come from the depths of the earth, and was followed by a momentary underground reverberation. Then all became still as death, and hundreds of faces white with terror turned in the direction of the works.

"God of heaven! That came from the mines.

Something has happened there!" cried Lorenz, starting up.

"It was an explosion," said the chief engineer, who during the last critical moments had stood in the vestibule below, at the head of the younger officers and the whole available force of servants, so as to be ready to hasten to the help of the chief. "An accident has happened in the mines, Herr Berkow. We must go over."

For an instant horror seemed to palsy all around. No one stirred; the warning had been too terrible. At the very moment when one party with deadly hatred would have hurled itself against the other, a mortal danger had overtaken their brethren down in the mines and imperiously summoned them from assault to rescue. Arthur was the first to recover his self-possession.

"To the mines!" he cried to his officers, who now rushing out of the house gathered around him, and he himself gave the example as in advance of all he hastened to the works.

"To the mines!" thundered Ulrich also to the miners, but the command was no longer needed. The whole mass, in bewildered haste, were already rushing in that direction, their leader at their head. He and Berkow were the first to reach the works, and both reached them almost at the same moment.

There was no outward evidence of the work of the destroying element, none but the dense pillars of smoke which rose above the shafts. These told what had happened, and they told enough. In less

than ten minutes the whole space around the mines was filled with men whose first dumb horror had now yielded to loud outbursts of anguish, terror, and despair.

There is something terrible and yet sublime in such a great misfortune which does not come from mortal hand, for it almost always redeems the honor of human nature and purifies it from those baser passions which usually disfigure and overshadow it.

Here the change in the people's mood had been so sudden, so lightning-like in its swiftness that it no longer seemed the same mob which a few minutes before had raged around the house, menacing all its inmates with violence and perhaps murder because their insane demands were not granted. Strife, hostility, hatred, fostered for months long, all had now subsided into the one thought of rescue. To this rescue alike hurried miners and officers, friend and foe; and the most violent of the rioters now led the band. An hour ago they had threatened their comrades, had laid violent hands on them, and would have stricken them down if it had not been the father of Ulrich Hartmann who led them to the mines; and now—when these very comrades were in mortal danger—now every one would have risked his life to save them. The fearful warning had borne its fruit.

"Back!" cried Arthur imperiously as he confronted the bewildered, aimless throng. "You cannot just now help: you only hinder the efforts of the officers. It must first be decided how and

where we can enter the shafts. Let the chief engineer take the lead."

"Let the chief engineer take the lead!" repeated the foremost; and the cry went throught the line, and the dense mass at once opened a path for that officer, who with his subordinates was already upon the spot.

"To enter down yonder will be an impossibility," said the chief engineer to Arthur, pointing to the lower shaft, which was connected with the others, and at whose mouth smoke and vapor arose in mighty columns. "We have made the attempt, but in vain: nothing human can breathe in that infernal air. Hartmann tried it, but after a few steps he retreated half-stifled, and had to bring out Lorenz with him, who had followed but had fallen at the very entrance. Our only hope lies in the upper shaft. Set the machinery in motion: we must ascend there."

The machine-master, to whom the last words were addressed, and who had stood near pale and agitated, made no motion to obey.

"The machines refuse to do their work," he said in a voice of anguish: "they have for an hour. I should before have announced this to the officers, but my messenger could not make his way to them through the mob, and I thought that in any event the miners could ascend through the lower shaft. We have already worked a long time upon the elevator, but in vain. It cannot be made available."

"Heaven and earth! do they fail us now?" cried the chief engineer, rushing into the machine-house.

"But the foot-way shaft?" said Arthur hastily, turning to the director. "Can we not go down there?"

The director shook his head.

"The foot-way shaft has been impassable since this morning. You know, Herr Berkow, that Hartmann had all the upper ladders destroyed because he would at any price hinder the descent of the miners. He did not fully succeed. The workmen went down the main shaft, and at present this is our only entrance into the mines."

Ulrich now appeared, with Wilms and several of his usual companions.

"Nothing is going on down there," he said to his comrades as he made his way through all. "We are sacrificing life needlessly when we ought to be rescuing it. Perhaps we can do so here. Why is the elevator not at work? We must go down by its help."

As he was violently rushing forward he suddenly met the young chief, who gazed sternly at him.

"The elevator will not work," he said loudly and sharply. "It ceased an hour ago, and ten minutes ago the accident happened. These two events have no connection, but it was just an hour ago we arrested your three men. What had they done, Hartmann?"

Ulrich staggered back as if he had received a blow.

"I recalled my order," said he, "the moment my father went down and the others followed. I went

myself to hinder its execution, but the mischief had already been done. I did not wish it. God knows I did not!"

Arthur turned from him to the chief engineer, who had just come out of the machine-house.

"Well, how is it?" he asked quickly.

The officer shrugged his shoulders.

"The machinery will not work," he said. "Still we have not been able to find where the trouble lies. The injury has not come from the explosion: it is from a human hand. If we do not succeed in repairing it, all entrance into the mines is denied us and all below are lost without hope of rescue, Overseer Hartmann among them."

At these last words he had raised his voice and fixed his eyes upon Ulrich, who with a face white as that of a corpse stood there dumb and motionless. But now he trembled and made a hasty movement forward. Arthur stepped into his way.

"Where would you go?"

"I must go down!" he said breathlessly. "I must help. Let me go, Herr Berkow. I must, I tell you!"

"You cannot help," interposed Arthur bitterly. "We can do nothing with our arms alone. You could destroy and make the danger tenfold. The work of restoration must be left to the officers. They alone can make it possible for us to rescue our imperiled workmen, and they must be neither disturbed nor hindered in their task. Keep guard around here, Herr Director, and you, Herr Wilberg,

bring the three prisoners here immediately. They must know where they have laid their hands. Perhaps they may give an intimation to the engineers. Hasten!"

Wilberg obeyed, and the director also made preparations to carry out the commands of his chief. He met with no resistance. All knew what hung upon the efforts of the officers and all obeyed willingly. They felt something of the truth of those words Herr Berkow had once flung back against the obstinate demands of their leader.

"Try all this if the hated element is wanting which gives direction to your arms, force to your machinery, and intellect to your work!"

Here were hundreds of arms, hundreds of strong men ready to help; and the whole power, the whole possibility of rescue lay in the hands of the few who must lend science to their work so as to bring help where the multitude and their leader could do nothing at the utmost but rush blindly into certain death. These officers, once so hated and despised—upon them all glances now hung; and wherever one of them came in sight all crowded around him. They would now at any cost have protected them and their work had they needed such protection.

Minute after minute passed in anxious, agonized suspense. Wilberg had long since returned with the three prisoners. They knew what had happened. They came in breathless haste, like all the others; like them to stand there aimless and despairing. They were no longer needed, for the

reason of the stoppage of the machinery was already found. The injury had proved slight and its immediate reparation was possible. The engineers, under the direction of their superior, did their utmost, while outside they organized their plans for rescue and constantly, but still in vain, sought to force entrance into the mines on other sides. The danger had, as at one stroke, firmly reunited the loosened bands of discipline. All obeyed, and obeyed better and more quickly than even before the outbreak of the revolt.

But the chief himself accomplished more than all the rest. His eyes, his voice were everywhere. Everywhere he knew how to work himself, how to inspire others. Arthur possessed little or nothing of the science and experience so needed here. The young heir had been reared in the fullest ignorance of what it most concerned him to know, but one faculty he possessed which cannot be instilled by culture or training—the genius of command. And this was the faculty most of all wanted here, where the chief engineer, the only energetic one among the officers, was kept inside occupied with the machinery, and the director, as well as the others, half-stunned at the sudden change of affairs and at the catastrophe itself, in spite of their science, experience, and capability, had all lost their presence of mind.

It was Arthur who gave it back to them—Arthur who with his quick glance posted every one in the right place and incited all to do their utmost; it

was he who by his energy impelled and inspired all. The character of this young man, so long misunderstood by those around him and by himself most of all, had never shone forth so brilliantly as in this hour of peril.

At last was heard the heavy, groaning sound with which the machinery resumed its work; then followed the panting and creaking of its mighty frame, at first fitfully and interruptedly, then at regular intervals. The works rose and fell with their wonted obedience. The chief engineer stepped to Herr Berkow, but his face had become no more cheerful.

"The machinery is again in order," he said, "but I fear it is too late or too early for the descent. The vapor rises even here. The fire-damp must again be breaking out. We shall have to wait."

Arthur made an impatient gesture.

"Wait! We have waited a whole hour already, and the lives of these unfortunate men hang upon every moment. Do you think it will be possible to go down?"

"It is perhaps possible; this seems to be only vapor which rises here; but every one who goes down risks his life. I would not venture."

"But I will!" cried Ulrich with grim determination. At the moment when the machinery began to work he had rushed violently forward and now stood close by the shaft. "I will go down," he repeated; "but one alone can do nothing there. I must have help. Who goes with me?"

No one answered; every one seemed to recoil from a descent into this smoking abyss. They had all seen how the courageous ones who at the first had sought to force an entrance had reeled back or fallen. Lorenz still lay senseless from a venture which his stronger comrade had made without injury. But no one possessed the courage to follow Ulrich in a descent where return or retreat were almost impossible.

"*No one?*" asked Ulrich after a pause. "Very well, then, I will go alone. Give the signal!"

He sprang into the seat, but suddenly a small white hand was laid upon its blackened edge and a clear voice said firmly:

"Wait, Hartmann! I go with you."

A cry of horror from the lips of the assembled officers gave answer to this decision; from all sides arose the most violent opposition.

"For God's sake, Herr Berkow, do not go!" "You are needlessly sacrificing your life." "You cannot help!" These exclamations were heard from all sides and in every tone of horror and anguish.

Arthur rose erect. The full self-consciousness of the lord and master flashed from his eyes.

"I do not do this for aid: it is for the example," he said. "If I go others will follow. Do all possible above here to rescue us, Herr Engineer. The director will maintain order. For the moment I have nothing to offer my workmen but courage, and that I intend to show them.

"But not alone, and not with Hartmann," exclaimed the chief engineer, almost forcing him back. "Beware, Herr Berkow! It is the same elevator and the same company which proved fatal to your father, and below there something might menace you more dangerous than the explosive fire-damp."

It was the first time the accusation had been publicly and boldly made in the presence of the miners, and although none ventured to join in it, the faces of all betrayed that they fully believed it. Ulrich yet stood in his place silent and motionless. He did not contradict; he did not defend himself; but his eyes, with steady, open gaze, were fixed upon the young chief, as if from that mouth alone he expected absolution or condemnation.

Arthur's glance met his for a moment only; then he broke loose from the strong arms which sought to restrain him.

"Below there in the mines there are more than a hundred lost men if we do not help them, and there I think no hand will be raised but to save. Give the signal! Lend me your arm, Hartmann. You must help me."

Trembling, Ulrich reached forth his arm to give the required assistance. The next minute, Arthur stood at his side.

"As soon as we arrive safe below," he said, "send down all who wish and are able to follow us. *Glück auf!*"

"*Glück auf!*" repeated Ulrich in a hollow voice, but with the same firmness.

It had a weird, almost ghost-like sound, this salutation which both men threw up from the depths of the abyss which now received them. The elevator sank slowly. Those standing above saw only how the young chief, giddy at the strange descent, stupefied at the vapor now happily but faint, reeled backward, and how with a quick movement Hartmann placed his strong arm around him and held him up; then both vanished in that suffocating pit of vapor. Arthur was right. His descent decided all, while that of Ulrich remained without effect. They were accustomed to see the steiger Hartmann imperil his life for immeasurably less cause than this, and always to rescue it unharmed; so that there was already among his comrades a sort of superstitious belief that no danger could reach him. It was he who had made the foot-way shaft impassable, and his attempt upon the elevator had caused more than an hour's delay, and his father was down there with the others, lost, perhaps, through his act; and so, as a matter of course, he would without hesitation rush into a danger none else could wish to share.

But when the chief set the example—this delicately reared, aristocratic man who had never entered his mines when they were supposed to be safe, and who now forced his way down when death threatened every one—as he went before so all followed. Next him were the three miners who this morning had laid their hands upon the elevator, which now carried them down under the guidance

of one of the engineers. Then came new and still new helpers: no exhortation, no command was needed. The chief engineer very soon had to keep back the rushing throng because the services of only a part could be made available.

Hour after hour went by. The sun had long since reached the meridian, long since neared its setting, and still below there, in the bosom of the earth, human intellect and human will contended with the destroying elements to wrest from them their sacrifices. It was a battle more terrible than could have been fought in the light of day; every foot's-breadth must first be conquered, every step be won in the face of mortal danger to make it a possibility to press forward; but they still pressed forward, and it seemed as if these unheard-of exertions would receive an unheard-of reward.

Universal sympathy was awakened for these unfortunate men; all hoped to rescue them, for they still lived, or a part of them at least. A happy accident—the discovery of two miners lost or bewildered in their haste to escape—furnished the right clew. The explosion seemed to have only partially affected the upper shaft, and the miners must have had time enough to flee for refuge to one of the side passages, where the vapor could not reach them, but where the falling in of a portion of the outside wall had blocked them up and cut off their escape. The aim of the rescuers was now to work through to their comrades by a way which at least seemed possible, and

to the carrying out of this hastily formed and reasonable plan all lent their utmost endeavors.

"Even if the whole earth lies above them we must make our way to them!" Ulrich had exclaimed as the first clew was found, and this had become the rallying-cry of all.

There was not one who quailed, not one who shunned the perilous duty imposed upon him. With most, strength and ardor kept equal pace, and yet, not to increase the number of victims, many had to be sent back exhausted and half-stupefied, to be replaced by new helpers. There were only two whom nothing moved, nothing wearied—Ulrich Hartmann with his iron body and Arthur Berkow with his iron will. This will to-day had lent that tenderly reared, frailly built man nerves as of steel and helped him to endure amid surroundings and in dangers to which so many stronger men were not equal.

Both held out; side by side they pressed forward, always in advance, always the first. While Ulrich's giant strength accomplished almost incredible things and triumphed over obstacles which seemed invincible to human hand, it sufficed to the "master" that he stood at the head, that he was the head. He could in truth not do much more than inspire the men with courage for their work, but this was enough, far more than his arm could have accomplished. Three times already had the hand of his more experienced companion snatched him back, when, unacquaint-

ed with the dangers of the mines, he had imprudently exposed himself; repeatedly the chief engineer had entreated him to turn back, now that there were men enough to help and officers enough to assist; every time Arthur most decidedly refused. He felt how much depended upon his remaining among the workmen, who from mutiny and sedition had hastened to this work of rescue. They all looked upon the chief who, since he had been aroused to self-dependence, had always been opposed to them, and who to-day for the first time stood with them in need and death; who like the humblest of them periled his life; like them, had left up above there a young wife in mortal anguish.

In this hour of common labor and danger there was at last extorted from them the confidence they had so long denied. There below, in the depths of those rocky mines, the old hatred and the old dissension were buried; there the quarrel ended. Arthur knew that for him the remaining here meant more than a mere risk of his life, which any other in his place might have offered; he knew that by this perseverance he contended for the future of his works; and for this price he left Eugenie alone in her anguish and remained.

The work went on with unwearied energy, unwearied persistence. They pressed forward slowly, step by step, but still they pressed forward, and soon the malicious powers of the mines yielded to the will of men who had forced a path to their brothers there below. When the sun above neared his setting the

way to rescue had been found, and the rescued were lifted up to the light of day, wounded indeed, half-suffocated, stupefied by terror and mortal agony, but still living; and there followed them, as it were wearied to death, the rescuers. The chief and Hartmann, the two foremost in this heroic undertaking, were the last to return: they would not leave the mines until all were saved.

"I do not know what it means that the chief and Hartmann still linger down there," said the chief engineer anxiously to the surrounding officers. "They were already at the outlet when the last men were brought up, and Hartmann certainly knows the dangers of the mines too well to linger a moment longer than necessity demands. The elevator still waits below; they give no sign, answer none of our signals. What does that mean?"

"What if an accident should happen at the very last moment!" said Wilberg nervously. "Just now I heard a strange noise in the mines, just as the last men came up. The distance was too great and the creaking of the elevator too loud for me to distinguish plainly, but the whole earth around seemed shaken. I only hope that no falling in of the shafts has followed."

"God grant that it may be so!" cried the chief engineer. "Give the signal with all your might! If it remains unanswered we must go down and see what has happened."

CHAPTER XXI.

But before he or the others could carry out this decision the signal for ascent was quickly and violently given from below. All above ground breathed more freely and pressed nearer to the mouth of the shaft, in which, after a short delay, the elevator appeared.

Ulrich stood upon it, his face distorted by pain and blackened by the soot of the mines, his clothes torn and covered with earth and gravel, while blood oozed from his forehead and temples. As at the descent, his arms were around the young chief; but now he supported not merely a staggering man. Arthur's head lay upon his shoulder. The face was white as death, the eyes were closed, and the form hung lifeless and motionless in the arms which held it upright only by the exertion of all their strength.

A cry of horror rose from all sides. The men scarce waited until the machine stood still. More than twenty arms were outstretched to receive the unconscious man and bear him to his wife, who, like all the others, during the whole time had not moved from the scene of the accident. All crowded around Arthur and his wife. They called for assistance, for the physician; and none in all the

confusion had a thought for Ulrich, who, strangely silent and submissive, had let them take the burden from his arms.

He did not spring with his wonted quickness and agility from the elevator; slowly, painfully he stepped out, and had to grasp twice at the chain for support. Not a syllable was heard from him, but the young miner's teeth were set in silent agony, and the blood now flowed in a torrent, although, under the thick coating of dust and soot, none saw that in deathly pallor his face quite equaled that of the young chief. He staggered a few steps forward, until near the group which was now pressing around Arthur; then he suddenly paused, and with both arms embraced a pillar of the building for support.

"Calm yourself, my lady: it is only a swoon," consolingly said the physician who had hastened to the aid of Arthur Berkow. "I do not find that your husband has sustained the slightest injury. He will recover."

Eugenie did not hear the comforting words; she saw only the closed eyes, only the prostrate form which gave no sign of life.

There had been a time in this young wife's experience when only a few hours after her marriage a stranger hand had rescued her from mortal peril, and she was still in uncertainty as to her husband's fate—a time when with cool self-composure, almost indifference, she had said to the rescuer: "See after Herr Berkow!"

That sin of coldness and disdain was now bitterly atoned for by the anguish of these last hours, in which she had learned what it means to tremble for the loved one without being able to help him or even to be near him. Now she allowed no other at his side; now she knelt by his prostrate form, and, like any other wife, in hopeless agony called her husband's name:

"Arthur!"

It was a cry of passionate love, of utter despair; and as it rang forth a convulsive quiver passed through the frame of the young miner, who still leaned against the pillar for support.

Yet once again he turned his melancholy blue eyes and fixed them upon both, but in them there lay nothing of the old hatred and defiance, only a deep, silent agony. Then their glance was veiled; the hand rose, not to the bleeding forehead, but to the breast, which, though it bore no wound, he pressed tightly, as if there were the worst pain of all; and at the very moment when Arthur, in the arms of his wife, opened his eyes, Ulrich fell senseless behind them.

Although all had been rescued from the mines, a strange silence and oppression rested upon the assembled throng. No shouts, no expressions of joy were audible: the appearance of the rescued men forbade. They did not yet know who would really be restored to life, or if Death might not yet demand the victims with such difficulty snatched from

his grasp. The young chief had recovered from his swoon more quickly than had been hoped. It had been a caving in of earth which at the very last moment had struck him and his companion, but which, strange to relate, had not wounded Arthur in the least. He again stood upright, although still weak and pale, and leaning upon his wife's arm tried to collect his scattered thoughts so as to answer her anxious inquiries.

"We had already reached the outlet of the shaft, Hartmann some steps ahead, and therefore in safety; then he must have remarked some token of danger. I saw him suddenly rush back to me and grasp my arm: but it was too late; already all above and around us wavered. I only felt how he flung me to the ground and threw himself over me; I felt how with his own body he covered me from the down-rushing fragments; then my senses left me."

Eugenie made no answer. She had so unspeakably feared the nearness of this man! she had trembled with such indescribable terror when she heard that Arthur was about to take this venture in his company! And now she must thank his presence alone that she held her husband alive and safe in her arms.

The chief engineer approached these two. His face was very grave and his voice was deep and mournful as he said:

"The physician thinks they will all recover—all but one, and that is Hartmann; him no help can

avail. What he did down in the mines to-day was too much for even his giant nature, and the wound has done the rest. I cannot at all comprehend how, in spite of this severe wound, he succeeded in lifting you up from the mass of earth and stones, Herr Berkow, in placing you in the elevator, and holding you fast until you came safe to the light of day. He did it, but he must atone for it with his life."

Arthur looked at his wife. Their glances met and each understood the other. In spite of his exhaustion Arthur roused himself, and grasping Eugenie's hand led her forth to the place where the rescued miners had at first been taken to receive the aid and sympathy so abundantly offered.

Friends and relatives had borne away all but one. Ulrich Hartmann lay stretched upon the ground. His father had not yet returned to consciousness and knew nothing of the fate of his son; but he was not alone nor dependent upon stranger aid. At his side knelt a young girl, who held the dying man's head in her arms and with an expression of heart-rending agony gazed into his face, without in the least regarding her betrothed, who stood on the other side and held the hand of his friend, now growing cold. Ulrich did not see either: he perhaps did not know that they were near him. His wide-open eyes were fixed upon the flaming evening sky, upon the sinking sun, as if he would receive yet one beam of the eternal light and take it with him over into the long rayless night before him.

Arthur had addressed a half-audible question to the physician who stood near; he answered with a silent shrug of the shoulders. The young chief knew enough. Loosening his hand from that of his wife, he whispered some words in her ear and then stepped aside, while Eugenie bent over Ulrich and called his name.

Then, even through the mists of death, broke forth a mighty flame. The whole fire and passion of a lifetime were for a moment concentrated in that glance which with the fullest consciousness he gave the young woman, from whose lips came this low, sorrowful question:

"Hartmann, are you severely wounded?"

The agony of a few moments before again quivered through his features; his voice sounded hollow and broken, but calm.

"Why do you ask after me? You have *him* again. Why should I want to live? I have already said to you, 'he or I.' I certainly then supposed things would turn out quite differently from this, but that threat passed through my mind when the wall fell in. I thought of you and of your sorrow, and I remembered also that he had reached me his hand as no other man would have done; and then, then—I threw myself upon him to shield him from the impending danger."

He sank back. While he yet spoke the spark, kindling into a fitful momentary gleam, went out; but the wild, glowing life, without pain or struggle, bled slowly and calmly away to death.

The man whose whole existence had been only hatred and warfare against those whom destiny had placed above him had found his death in rescuing the chief he hated. The prophecy the waters of the stream had yesterday murmured in his ear was now verified. From the depths of the mines, from a deed of self-sacrifice, the death-greeting had come to him. There was now no need that he should gaze with anxious foreboding out into a to-morrow so thickly veiled from his sight. With that to-morrow all had ended for him—all!

From the highway yonder sounded the measured tread of an advancing host, words of command, and the clatter of arms. The military help expected from the garrison had arrived to put down the revolt. Immediately upon entering the colony the commanding officer learned what had happened, and bidding his men halt he had come, accompanied by a few of his subordinates, to the scene of the disaster, where he asked an interview with the chief.

"I thank you, colonel," said Arthur Berkow with quiet gravity, "but you came too late. I do not need your help against my men. In a mutual ten hours' struggle for the lives of our miners we have made peace—let it be hoped forever!"

CHAPTER XXII.

Again it was summer; again summer's splendor and sunshine lay upon wooded hills and valleys and over all the Berkow colony, where life, as stirring and vigorous as ever, had become more free and happy. There floated now, as it were, an atmosphere of freedom and prosperity over all the works, which had lost nothing in magnitude, while they had won all which had been wanting to them. This certainly had not been a work of weeks or months: it had taken years; and they had been full of anxiety and toil—those years which had followed the catastrophe.

When work upon the mines was resumed a heavy burden lay upon the shoulders of the young chief, who, although he had made peace with his workmen, stood upon the brink of ruin. That time of danger, when by his personal courage and sacrifice he had opposed the excesses of a rebellious mob, was over; but now came other, graver duties—a time of care, of steady, arduous work, of often despairing conflict with the might of circumstance; and these almost crushed Arthur to the earth.

In the first struggle he had learned and proved his strength; in the second he knew how to use it.

For more than a year it had remained doubtful whether the mines would retain their organization or their possessor, and even after this first dangerous crisis was past there were still enough dangers and losses to challenge the utmost endurance.

During the later years of the elder Berkow daring speculations, boundless expenditures, and, above all, a system of operations based only upon immediate gain—a system whose disastrous consequences had at last fallen upon the proprietor himself—had imperiled both the Berkow position and fortune. The cessation of the works, which for almost a month had lain idle, the accident in the mines, to repair which great sums were necessary, threatened utter ruin to the already half-ruined chief. More than once it seemed impossible to maintain the works; more than once it seemed as if the wounds which past dissensions and more than all this last quarrel had inflicted must be incurable; but Arthur's character, aroused at so late an hour, grew firm as steel and became fully developed in this school of enforced uninterrupted activity.

All had tottered and threatened to collapse when, years before, the young chief had assumed the arduous task of creating a new order of things out of the chaos of business obligations and demands which must first of all be arranged. But he had learned confidence in himself; he had his wife at his side; and he had a whole future, a life's happiness for her and himself to win. This it was which lent

him courage, where perhaps any other would have given up, will-less and despairing; this it was which sustained him when the task seemed beyond his strength; this it was which at the last won for him the victory.

Now the last painful consequences of that catastrophe were overcome, and the old prosperity had been restored to all the enterprises attached to the name of Berkow. But this name had been divested of its former ill-repute: it now stood pure and honorable before all the world. The works, with their giant extent and their vast activity, were more firmly and securely grounded than ever before, and with them also the wealth of their possessor. This wealth had once threatened to prove fatal to the young, spoiled heir and had in a measure become so, because without effort of his own a fortune had been laid at his feet and he had regarded it with scornful indifference. Now, when in a struggle of years' duration he had been obliged to win back the lost fortune—now, when in his hands it had become a blessing for many, it had also become of worth to him.

It was toward mid-day, and the director and the chief engineer were going home from the mines. Both had grown older with the lapse of years, but they had not changed. The one had retained his good-nature, the other his malice, which once more gave intonation to his voice as he said, continuing the conversation before begun:

"The Herr Baron Windeg has announced his coming through his eldest son. It seems they now plume themselves somewhat on a relationship to which at first they vouchsafed to descend very much against their will. Since our business and our organization have received such wonderfully flattering attention from government, those in higher places have become interested in us and the old aristocracy consider our works worthy of representation at court. This son-in-law certainly can rank with the Windegs. The whole Rabenau heirship and magnificence does not half-equal the Berkow possessions and the influence of our chief. The baron now sees that with his estates he is lost in the multitude of other proprietors, while we have become a power in the province to which no one any longer denies recognition."

"But we are accomplishing more than any of the other works," said the director. "They are everywhere studying our organization and our improvements; and yet none have imitated us."

"Ah, yes; and if things go on as now we shall soon be ranked among those 'philanthropic institutions' against which the late Herr Berkow once so vigorously protested. Well, God be thanked"—here the chief engineer raised his head with intense self-satisfaction—"we are able now to be one of these! It does not at all embarrass us to expend upon our workmen sums that other proprietors must anxiously hide in their pockets; and these sums are not small. And yet only a little while

ago we had neither means nor influence, but had to struggle for the very existence of the works; and we could not have saved them if at the decisive crisis two lucky accidents had not come to our help."

"And if our miners had not conducted themselves so excellently," added the director gravely. "It was no slight thing for them to remain calm while mutiny and insurrection continued all around us upon the other works. That accident in the mines cost us vast expenditures of money when every thousand was difficult for us to obtain, but I believe that with these outlays we have not paid too dearly for what we have won from our workmen. No man forgets to-day, none will ever forget, those hours of anxiety and danger our chief shared with them in the mines to rescue their comrades. These have bound him and his miners together. Since that day they have believed in him and in his promise to do all in his power to promote their interest, if they would only give him time and permission to proceed in the way he thought best. They have honorably waited, and it is no wonder that he has done more than he promised."

"All very well!" said the chief engineer dryly. "He can now afford himself some luxuries in the way of benevolence. But under the circumstances it is a consoling fact that we are carrying on a most flourishing business with our philanthropy, as our yearly accounts prove. They are far more considerable than under the old *régime*, which could

not be reproached with any especial philanthropic acts; and still at that time all that could be forced out of the works was forced out of them."

"You are an incorrigible scoffer!" said the director angrily. "You know best of all that Herr Berkow does not allow himself to be actuated by such motives."

"No, he is too much of an idealist for that," replied the chief engineer, taking the reproach very indifferently. "Happily he is no more so than accords with practice, for he has been led through too bitter a school not to know that in the end the practical must remain the foundation and prime condition of all such efforts. For my part, I am no idealist: you must know that."

The director laughed somewhat maliciously.

"Yes, we all know that," said he; "but may it not in a measure change matters when such a highly ideal element as Herr Wilberg enters your family? That is very soon to happen, is it not, Herr Colleague?"

By this reminder the director seemed to have returned a sly thrust to his colleague, for the latter drew down his face and said petulantly:

"Don't speak of this to me again! I hear enough of it at home. That must suffice me—me who detest nothing so much as sentimentality and affectation! And even for me destiny seems to have raised up a prospective son-in-law who makes verses and plays the guitar! The fellow is not to be got rid of, with his wooing and his sighing; and

Melanie will not listen to reason. But I have not yet said 'Yes,' and it is doubtful if ever I do."

"Well, we will leave all that to Melanie," laughed the director. "She has her father's obstinacy in many things and knows how to carry out her will. I can assure you that Wilberg already goes about with an air as if certain of victory, and waives all congratulations with a very expressive '*Not yet!*' The two young people must feel sure of success. Adieu, dear colleague! Will you not announce this joyful family event to me first of all?"

This time the malice was on the director's side, and it seemed to have its effect, for with a very decided air the chief engineer mounted the steps of his dwelling, where his daughter already had come to meet him. Fräulein Melanie to-day showed an extraordinary tenderness for her father. She kissed him, she took his hat and gloves, she flattered him a little; and after these preliminaries took him aside to make a request of him.

"Papa, there is some one here who wishes to speak with you," she said, "who wishes to speak at once and urgently. He is within with mamma. Shall I bring him out?"

"I am not to be spoken to!" growled the father, who already suspected what lay before him.

But the young girl did not take the slightest notice of the refusal. She vanished into the adjoining room and the next minute pushed out the "some one," after she had hastily whispered a few encouraging words in his ear.

The latter precaution seemed necessary, for Herr Wilberg, who, with his blond hair carefully brushed, presented himself in a dress coat and other especial tokens of the official wooer, stood there as if he had unawares been cast into a lion's den. He had prepared an elegant, well-arranged speech for this momentous occasion, but the grim mien of his superior officer, who in any other than an encouraging tone asked what he could possibly want of him, made him quite forget it all.

"My wishes and hopes"—stammered he; "emboldened by the affection of Fräulein Melanie—the highest happiness to be able to call her mine——"

"I thought as much. The man cannot make even a sensible proposal!" muttered the chief engineer, not thinking that the reception he had given poor Wilberg was quite enough to deprive any wooer of his self-possession. But as the young man grew more and more embarrassed, more involved in his speech, he cut short his words.

"Now just be silent! It is certainly no secret to me what you wish and hope. You wish to have me for a father-in-law."

Wilberg looked as if this last unavoidable appendage to his future marriage inspired him with no especial rapture.

"I beg your pardon. I wished first of all to have Fräulein Melanie for my wife," remarked he timidly.

"Ah! and you very unwillingly take me into the bargain?" asked the enraged father-in-law *in spe.* "I cannot at all understand how you dare come to

me with such a proposal. Have you not loved her ladyship? Have you not filled sheet after sheet with verses to her? Why do you not go on with this Platonic love?"

"Good heavens! that was years ago!" pleaded the young officer in self-justification. "Melanie knew that long ago; and it was that very thing which brought us together. There are two kinds of love, my dear sir—a youthful enthusiasm which seeks its ideal in unattainable heights, and an enduring affection which finds upon the earth alone what can really make it happy."

"And so my daughter is good enough for this earthly, home-bred love! Get out with your nonsense!" cried the chief engineer in a rage.

"You will not understand me," said Wilberg, deeply wounded, but still with some self-possession. He knew what a powerful ally he had in the next room. "Melanie understands me. She has already given me her hand and heart."

"That is a pretty state of things!" growled the enraged father. "If daughters thus unhesitatingly make presents of their hands and hearts, I would really like to know what fathers are for. Wilberg" —here his voice became somewhat milder—"I do you the justice to say that during these last few years you have become somewhat more sensible, yet not sensible enough by a great deal. For example, you have never been able to leave off this poetizing. I would wager that you even now carry some lyric about you."

He leered rather suspiciously at the young man's breast-pocket. Wilberg blushed.

"As a betrothed man, might I not legitimately do this?" he remarked in a timid, questioning way.

"Ah, yes! and serenades too. This will be a beautiful summer," muttered the chief engineer despairingly. "See here, Wilberg! If I did not know that Melanie has my nature and will carry out this romantic whim in spite of me, I should say 'No,' absolutely *No!* But I believe you need a sensible wife, and, above all things, a sensible father-in-law who from time to time will set your head right. And so, as I really cannot help myself, I will let you marry each other."

Whether the latter acquisition seemed a very enviable one to Herr Wilberg may well be doubted, but in his rapture over the former he forgot all else and hastened to embrace the prospective father-in-law, who made rather short work with this formality.

"No sentimentality!" he said very decidedly. "I cannot suffer it and we need not delay for this. Now come with me to Melanie. You long ago planned all this behind my back, but I tell you if I ever catch you making verses and my child with red weeping eyes, then Heaven help you!"

While the chief engineer thus yielded to an inevitable distiny, up on the terrace of the country-house stood Arthur Berkow and Curt von Windeg. The latter, who had already bidden adieu to his sister, was waiting for his horse to be led up.

The deep and mighty change Arthur's inward being had experienced was also visible outwardly. He was no longer the delicate, slender, pale young man whose youthful strength and freshness had so nearly been lost by his life in the Residence. His appearance now fully coincided with the idea one would naturally form of the chief who knew how to conduct such giant enterprises with such energy. In truth, the lines which had so early been engraven upon his forehead, and which years of care and toil had deepened, had not been obliterated by the fortune and the future now so securely and permanently established. If such lines once find place they do not lightly vanish ; but they did not ill become this forehead and these features, where all was strengthened to a firm, earnest manhood. Curt remained the young, high-spirited officer whose lively eyes and fresh lips had lost nothing of their brightness and merriment.

"And I tell you, Arthur," he said excitedly, "you do papa wrong if you imagine he has still any prejudice against you. I wish you could have heard with me how he answered old Prince Waldstein, when he declared that our mining proprietors, in the present state of excitement and insurrection among the workmen, could have no enviable position. 'This cannot at all apply to my son-in-law,' said papa with full *aplomb*. 'He stands too firmly in his position and has too unlimited authority among his workmen, who really idolize him ; and my son-in-law is certainly equal to any emergency.'

But he will never forgive you for having refused the diploma of nobility, and he cannot become reconciled to having his grandson bear the plebeian name of Berkow."

A somewhat disdainful smile played around Arthur's lips.

"Well, I do not intend that the name shall be a disgrace to my boy," he said, "when he bears it out into the world, and I hope your father may live to see him placed beside a young Windeg. How stands it with your betrothal, Curt?"

The young officer drew down his face.

"Well," drawled he, "I suppose that will be the next thing to happen when we are again in Rabenau. Count Berning's estates join ours, and the Countess Alma will be eighteen next spring. Papa thinks that in my position of head of the house and future heir it is time I seriously thought of marriage. He has commanded me to make proposals to the young countess this summer."

"*Commanded?*" laughed Arthur. "And will you marry at command?"

"Well, what did you do, then, in your marrying?" asked Curt rather pettishly.

"Ah, yes! you are right. But with us it was an exceptional case."

"And it is not at all one with us," said Curt indifferently. "It is usually so in our circle. Papa wishes to see me married soon and according to my rank, and he will allow no contradiction unless from you. You have so impressed him that whatever

you do is sure to please him. But I have no particular objections to the marriage: only I would like to remain longer free."

Berkow shook his head.

"I believe you do quite right in this case, Curt, to submit to your father's wishes. Alma Berning, so far as I could remark at our last visit to Rabenau, is an amiable girl; and it is really time for the future heir to step forward and for the wild young lieutenant to retire. He has played some mad pranks, this lieutenant."

Curt petulantly flung back his head.

"Ah, yes! and from the paternal side, on all such occasions, his brother-in-law is held up before him as a pattern and loaded with such extravagant praises that, if it were not for the young officer's firmly grounded preference for this much-extolled exemplar, he might come to hate him thoroughly. And from just here springs that plan for my marriage. One time, at a scene of paternal admonition, I ventured to say, 'Arthur was once far wilder than I, and now, as a married man, he has become your highest type of excellence;' and then and there papa secretly formed the idea of making just such a model husband out of me! Well, for my part I have nothing against Alma; and besides, I will take an example from Eugenie and you. With perfect indifference, even with a perfect hatred, you came together in marriage, and have at last founded a real romance which is not yet ended. Perhaps we, too, shall be as happy."

An unmistakable expression of irony passed over Arthur's lips.

"I doubt that, dear Curt," hs eaid. "You do not seem at all created for a romance after marriage; and, above all things, remember every woman is not an Eugenie."

The young baron laughed alond.

"I thought that was what I was going to hear again. With exactly the same tone, Eugenie said to me this morning, as we were speaking upon this subject, 'You will not rank Arthur with other men, will you?' You really are spinning out your honeymoon to a great length."

"We had to renounce it at the beginning and must doubly atone for the delay. Can you really not remain longer?" asked Arthur.

'My leave of absence extends only to this evening. I come principally to announce the visit of my father and brothers. *Auf Wiedersehen*, Arthur!"

He swung himself upon his horse, gave another farewell greeting to his brother-in-law, and galloped away. Arthur was just going into the house, when an old miner appeared on the terrace and took off his hat to his chief.

"Ah, Overseer Hartmann!" said Berkow cordially. "Would you speak with me?"

The overseer approached respectfully and yet confidentially.

"With your permission I would, Herr Berkow. I have just been up yonder at my post and saw you take leave of the young baron. Then I thought I

would come and thank you for having made Lorenz master-miner. It has given great joy in our house."

"Lorenz has during these last years shown such efficiency that he deserved the post, and with his increasing family he must need it."

"Well, he has enough for wife and children: I see to that," said the overseer good-humoredly. "It was a sensible idea in Martha to make him agree to live in my house, so I am not quite alone in my old age and have great joy in their children. If it were not for them I should have nothing in the wide world."

At these last words the old man's face grew sad and his eyes moist. Arthur looked sympathetically down on him.

"Can you never get over this sorrow, Hartmann?" he asked.

The overseer shook his head.

"I cannot, Herr Berkow. He was my only one; and although he too often caused me more sorrow than joy, although at the last, with his uncontrollable nature, he quite broke away from me, I cannot forget Ulrich. Merciful God! why must I, an old man, be rescued with all the others, to endure this? With that one all else was buried from me."

"You should not speak so, Hartmann," said Arthur, gently chiding him. "You have still a firm dependence in Martha and her husband."

The old man sighed.

"Yes, in Martha! She also, like me, cannot get

over this trouble. Although she has husband and children, and a good husband he is, I see many a time how it is at her heart. It is a strange thing with many people, Herr Berkow. They can cause us anguish and misery, can grieve us to the inmost heart, and still we love them better than the noblest and best, who have never given us a sorrowful hour; we cannot loose our thoughts from them. Such a one was my Ulrich. What he was to his comrades before that unfortunate quarrel broke out, none before or after him has been; and though no blessing followed where he led them, they have not to this day forgotten him."

The old man wiped the bitter tears from his eyes as he grasped the hand Arthur had offered in silent sympathy and went quietly away. Eugenie, who during the last moments had appeared in the door without wishing to interrupt the conversation, now stepped to her husband.

"Can Hartmann never be reconciled?" she asked softly. "I never supposed that he loved his son so deeply and passionately."

Arthur gazed after the retreating form.

"I comprehend that," he said, "as I comprehend the blind devotion of his comrades. There was something mightily fascinating in the nature, in the whole individuality of this man. If I experienced this—I who had to wrestle with him for life and death—how much more those for whom he wrestled! What might this Ulrich and his followers not have accomplished if he had only understood his mission

in the world to be something other than hatred and destruction to all existing things!"

The young wife looked almost reproachfully up to her husband as she replied:

"And yet he proved to us that he could do something else than blindly hate. He was your avowed enemy, but when only one of you two could be saved he wrested you from destruction and plunged into death himself."

A shadow passed over Arthur's face, which might well grow sad at the remembrance of that time.

"I, of all, have least right to accuse him," said he, "and I have never done so since his hand rescued me from certain death. But, believe me, Eugenie, entire reconciliation with such an element would never have been possible. He would always have imperiled the future of my works, prevented peace with my workmen, and have forced me to a continual struggle for the mastery; and things between us had been carried too far for me to allow him to go on unpunished. If I had not accused and condemned him others would have done so. This has been spared to him and to us."

Eugenie leaned her head upon her husband's shoulder. It was still the beautiful blond head with the dark eyes, but the face was rosier and sunnier than in the earlier days of her married life. The old pallor and marble-like coldness had vanished from its expression, which was now beaming with happiness.

"It was a sad time, Arthur, that which followed

the catastrophe," she said with a voice slightly tremulous. "You had a terrible battle to fight, so terrible that my courage often threatened to give way utterly when I saw your brow always clouded, your eyes always sad, and I could still do nothing but remain at your side."

With the deepest tenderness he bent over her.

"And was that not enough, my Eugenie?" he said. "In that struggle I proved the might of two words which alone gave me joyfulness and courage and which often and again bore me up when the waves threatened to overwhelm me. They at the last have helped me to victory: My *wife* and my *child!*"

The sun stood high in the clear summer heaven and threw its beams upon the Berkow house and its flower-gemmed terraces, upon the works in the distance, where all this thousand-fold life and activity had developed in such mighty and many-sided forms that it seemed indeed no small thing to be called ruler of such a world. And these same sunbeams shed their glory around the mountains, with their forest crowns upon their heads, and that deep, mysterious life throbbing within their bosoms.

The somber realm, which these rocky arms would fain have eternally enfolded in their embrace and shut out from every mortal gaze, had still been compelled to open to the intellect of man. Science had forced those barriers and had wrested from the

clefts and abysses of the earth those treasures so long imprisoned in deepest night. And now they had been borne upward to the light of day, unfettered by that ancient magic word of the mountains, *Glück auf!*

THE END.

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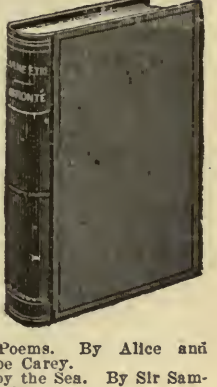

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